UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 00490462 9

Presented to
The Library
of the
University of Toronto
by
The Executors of Mrs. Hume Blake

LE
R956m

MODERN PAINTERS

BY

A GRADUATE OF OXFORD

> . . . . . "Accuse me not
> Of arrogance, ...
> If, having walked with Nature,
> And offered, far as frailty would allow,
> My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
> I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
> Whom I have served, that their Divinity
> Revolts, offended at the ways of men.
> Philosophers, who, though the human soul
> Be of a thousand faculties composed,
> And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
> This soul, and the transcendent universe
> No more than as a mirror that reflects
> To proud Self-love her own intelligence."
>
> WORDSWORTH

PART I.—II.

492850
9. 6. 49

VOLUME I.

SEEN BY
PRESERVATION
SERVICES
MAY 1992
DATE.....................

ALBANY
JAMES B. LYON
36 BEAVER STREET

ND
1135
R87
1873
V.1-2

TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

To

THE LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE work now laid before the public originated in indignation at the shallow and false criticism of the periodicals of the day on the works of the great living artist to whom it principally refers. It was intended to be a short pamphlet, reprobating the matter and style of those critiques, and pointing out their perilous tendency, as guides of public feeling. But, as point after point presented itself for demonstration, I found myself compelled to amplify what was at first a letter to the Editor of a Review, into something very like a treatise on art, to which I was obliged to give the more consistency and completeness, because it advocated opinions which, to the ordinary connoisseur, will sound heretical. I now scarcely know whether I should announce it is an Essay on Landscape Painting, and apologize for its frequent reference to the works of a particular master; or, announcing it as a critique on particular works, apologize for its lengthy disscussion of general principles. But of whatever character the work may be considered, the motives which led me to undertake it must not be mistaken. No zeal for the reputation of any individual, no personal feeling of any kind, has the slightest weight or influence with me. The reputation of the great artist to whose works I have chiefly referred, is established on too legitimate grounds among all whose admiration is honorable, to be in any way affected by the ignorant sarcasms of pretension and affectation. But when *public* taste seems plunging deeper and deeper into degradation day by day, and when the press universally exerts such power as it possesses to direct the feeling of the nation more completely to all that is theatrical, affected, and false in art; while it vents its ribald buffooneries on the most exalted truth, and the highest ideal of landscape, that this or any other age has ever witnessed, it becomes the imperative duty of all who have any perception or knowledge of what is really great in art, and any desire for its advancement in England, to come fearlessly forward, regardless of such individual interests as are likely to be injured by the knowledge of what is good and right, to declare and demonstrate, wherever they exist, the essence and the authority of the Beautiful and the True.

Whatever may seem invidious or partial in the execution of my task is dependent not so much on the tenor of the work, as on its incompleteness. I have not entered into systematic criticism of all the painters of the present day; but I have illustrated each particular excellence and truth of art by the works in which it exists in the highest degree, resting satisfied that if it be once rightly felt and enjoyed in these, it will be discovered and appreciated wherever exists in others. And although I have never suppresse any conviction of the superiority of one artist over anoth which I believed to be grounded on truth, and necessary to the understanding of truth, I have been cautious never to undermine positive rank, while I disputed relative rank. My uniform desire and aim have been, not that the present favorite should be admired less, but that the neglected master should be admired more. And I know that an increased perception and sense of truth and beauty, though it may interfere with our estimate of the comparative rank of painters, will invariably tend to increase our admiration of all who are really great; and he who now places Stanfield and Callcott above Turner, will admire Stanfield and Callcott more than he does now, when he has learned to place Turner far above them both.

In three instances only have I spoken in direct depreciation of the works of living artists, and these are all cases in which the reputation is so firm and extended, as to suffer little injury from the opinion of an individual, and where the blame has been warranted and deserved by the desecration of the highest powers.

Of the old masters I have spoken with far greater freedom; but let it be remembered that only a portion of the work is now presented to the public, and it must not be supposed, because in that particular portion, and with reference to particular excellencies, I have spoken in constant depreciation, that I have no feeling of other excellencies of which cognizance can only be taken in future parts of the work. Let me not be understood to mean more than I have said, nor be made responsible for conclusions when I have only stated facts. I have said that the old masters did not give the truth of Nature; if the reader chooses, thence, to infer that they were not masters at all, it is his conclusion, not mine.

Whatever I have asserted throughout the work, I have endeavored to ground altogether on demonstrations which must stand or fall by their own strength, and which ought to involve no more reference to authority or character than a demonstration in Euclid. Yet it is proper for the public to know, that the writer is no mere theorist, but has been devoted from his youth to the laborious study of practical art.

Whatever has been generally affirmed of the old schools of landscape-painting is founded on familiar acquaintance with every important work of art, from Antwerp to Naples. But it would be useless, where close and immediate comparison with works in our own Academy is desirable, to refer to the details of pictures at Rome or Munich; and it would be impossible to speak at once with just feeling, as regarded the possessor, and just freedom, as regarded the public, of pictures in private galleries. Whatever particular references have been made for illustration, have been therefore confined, as far as was in my power, to works in the National and Dulwich Galleries.

Finally, I have to apologize for the imperfection of a work which I could have wished not to have executed, but with years of reflection and revisal. It is owing to my sense of the necessity of such revisal, that only a portion of the work is now presented to the public; but that portion is both complete in itself, and is more peculiarly directed against the crying evil which called for instant remedy. Whether I ever completely fulfil my intention, will partly depend upon the spirit in which the present volume is received. If it be attributed to an invidious spirit, or a desire for the advancement of individual interests, I could hope to effect little good by farther effort. If, on the contrary, its real feeling and intention be understood, I shall shrink from no labor in the execution of a task which may tend, however feebly, to the advancement of the cause of real art in England, and to the honor of those great living Masters whom we now neglect or malign, to pour our flattery into the ear of Death, and exalt, with vain acclamation, the names of those who neither demand our praise, nor regard our gratitude.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It is allowed by the most able writers on naval and military tactics, that although the attack by successive divisions absolutely requires in the attacking party such an inherent superiority in quality of force, and such consciousness of that superiority, as may enable his front columns, or his leading ships, to support themselves for a considerable period against overwhelming numbers; it yet insures, if maintained with constancy, the most total ruin of the opposing force. Convinced of the truth, and therefore assured of the ultimate prevalence and victory of the principles which I have advocated, and equally confident that the strength of the cause must give weight to the strokes of even the weakest of its defenders, I permitted myself to yield to a somewhat hasty and hot-headed desire of being, at whatever risk, in the thick of the fire, and began the contest with a part, and that the weakest and least considerable part, of the forces at my disposal. And I now find the volume thus boldly laid before the public in a position much resembling that of the Royal Sovereign at Trafalgar, receiving, unsupported, the broadsides of half the enemy's fleet, while unforeseen circumstances have hitherto prevented, and must yet for a time prevent, my heavier ships of the line from taking any part in the action. I watched the first moments of the struggle with some anxiety for the solitary vessel,—an anxiety which I have now ceased to feel,—for the flag of truth waves brightly through the smoke of the battle, and my antagonists, wholly intent on the destruction of the leading ship, have lost their position and exposed themselves in defenceless disorder to the attack of the following columns.

If, however, I have had no reason to regret my hasty advance, as far as regards the ultimate issue of the struggle, I have yet found it to occasion much misconception of the character, and some diminution of the influence, of the present essay. For though the work has been received as only in sanguine moments I had ventured to hope, though I have had the pleasure of knowing that in many instances its principles have carried with them a strength of conviction amounting to a demonstration of their truth, and that, even where it has had no other influence, it has excited interest, suggested inquiry, and prompted to a just and frank comparison of Art with Nature ; yet this effect would have been greater still, had not the work been supposed, as it seems to have been by many readers, a completed treatise, containing a systematized statement of the whole of my views on the subject of modern art. Considered as such, it surprises me that the book should have received the slightest attention. For what respect could be due to a writer who pretended to criticise and classify the works of the great painters of landscape, without developing, or even alluding to, one single principle of the beautiful or sublime ? So far from being a completed essay, it is little more than the introduction to the mass of evidence and illustration which I have yet to bring forward ; it treats of nothing but the initiatory steps of art, states nothing but the elementary rules of criticism, touches only on merits attainable by accuracy of eye and fidelity of hand, and leaves for future consideration every one of the eclectic qualities of pictures, all of good that is prompted by feeling, and of great that is guided by judgment ; and its function and scope should the less have been mistaken, because I have not only most carefully arranged the subject in its commencement, but have given frequent references throughout to the essays by which it is intended to be succeeded, in which I shall endeavor to point out the signification and the value of those phenomena of external nature which I have been hitherto compelled to describe without reference either to their inherent beauty, or to the lessons which may be derived from them.

Yet, to prevent such misconception in future, I may perhaps be excused for occupying the reader's time with a fuller statement of the feelings with which the work was undertaken, of its general plan, and of the conclusions and positions which I hope to be able finally to deduce and maintain.

Nothing, perhaps, bears on the face of it more appearance of folly, ignorance, and impertinence, than any attempt to diminish the honor of those to whom the assent of many generations has assigned a throne ; for the truly great of later times have, almost without exception, fostered in others the veneration of departed power which they felt themselves, satisfied in all humility to take their seat at the feet of those whose honor is brightened by the hoariness of time, and to wait for the period when the lustre of many departed days may accumulate on their own heads, in the radiance which culminates as it recedes. The envious and incompetent have usually been the leaders of attack, content if, like the foulness of the earth, they may attract to themselves notice by their noisomeness, or, like its insects, exalt themselves by virulence into visibility. While, however, the envy of the vicious, and the insolence of the ignorant, are occasionally shown in their nakedness by *futile* efforts to degrade the dead, it is worthy of consideration whether they may not more frequently escape detection in *successful* efforts to degrade the living,—whether the very same malice may not be gratified, the very same incompetence demonstrated in the unjust lowering of present greatness, and the unjust exaltation of a perished power, as, if exerted and manifested in a less safe direction, would have classed the critic with Nero and Caligula, with Zoilus and Perrault. Be it remembered, that the spirit of detraction is detected only when unsuccessful, and receives least punishment where it effects the greatest injury ; and it cannot but be felt that there is as much danger that the rising of new stars should be concealed by the mists which are unseen, as that those throned in heaven should be darkened by the clouds which are visible.

There is, I fear, so much malice in the hearts of most men, that they are chiefly jealous of that praise which can give the greatest pleasure, and are then most liberal of eulogium when it can no longer be enjoyed. They grudge not the whiteness of the sepulchre, because by no honor they can bestow upon it can the senseless corpse be rendered an object of envy ; but they are niggardly of the reputation which contributes to happiness, or advances to fortune. They are glad to obtain credit for generosity and humility by exalting those who are beyond the reach of praise, and thus to escape the more painful necessity of doing homage to a living rival. They are rejoiced to set up a standard of imaginary excellence, which may enable them, by insisting on the inferiority of a contemporary work to the things that have been, to withdraw the attention from its superiority to the things that are. The same undercurrent of jealousy operates in our reception of animadversion. Men have commonly more pleasure in the criticism which hurts than in that which is innocuous, and are more tolerant of the severity which breaks hearts and ruins fortunes, than of that which falls impotently on the grave.

And thus well says the good and deep-minded Richard Hooker: "To the best and wisest, while they live, the world is continually a froward opposite ; and a curious observer of their defects and imperfections, their virtues afterwards it as much admireth. And for this cause, many times that which deserveth admiration would hardly be able to find favor, if they which propose it were not content to profess themselves therein scholars and followers of the ancient. For the world will not endure to hear that we are wiser than any have been which went before."—Book v. ch. vii. 3. He, therefore, who would maintain the cause of contemporary excellence against that of elder time, must have almost every class of men arrayed against him. The generous, because they would not find matter of accusation against established dignities ; the envious, because they like not the sound of a living man's praise ; the wise, because they prefer the opinion of centuries to that of days ; and the foolish, because they are incapable of forming an opinion of their own. Obloquy so universal is not lightly to be risked, and the few who make an effort to stem the torrent, as it is made commonly in favor of their own works, deserve the contempt which is their only reward. Nor is this to be regretted, in its influence on the progress and preservation of things technical and communicable. Respect for the ancients is the salvation of art, though it sometimes blinds us to its *ends.* It increases the pôwer of the painter, though it diminishes his liberty; and if it be sometimes an incumbrance to the essays of invention, it is oftener a protection from the consequences of audacity. The whole system and discipline of art, the collected results of the experience of ages, might, but for the fixed authority of antiquity, be swept away by the rage of fashion, or lost in the glare of novelty; and the knowledge which it had taken centuries to accumulate, the principles which mighty minds had arrived at only in dying, might be overthrown by the frenzy of a faction, and abandoned in the insolence of an hour.

Neither, in its general application, is the persuasion of the superiority of former works less just than useful. The greater number of them are, and must be, immeasurably nobler than any of the results of present effort, because that which is best of the productions of four thousand years must necessarily be, in its accumulation, beyond all rivalry from the works of any given generation ; but it should always be remembered that it is improbable that many, and impossible that all, of such works, though the greatest yet produced, should approach abstract perfection ; that there is certainly something left for us to carry farther, or complete ; that any given generation has just the same chance of producing some individual mind of first-rate calibre, as any of its predecessors ; and that if such a mind *should* arise, the chances are, that with the assistance of experience and example, it would, in its particular and chosen path, do greater things than had been before done.

We must therefore be cautious not to lose sight of the real use of what has been left us by antiquity, nor to take that for a model of perfection which is, in many cases, only a guide to it. The picture which is looked to for an interpretation of nature is invaluable, but the picture which is taken as a substitute for nature, had better be burned; and the young artist, while he should shrink with horror from the iconoclast who would tear from him every landmark and light which has been bequeathed him by the ancients, and leave him in a liberated childhood, may be equally certain of being betrayed by those who would give him the power and the knowledge of past time, and then fetter his strength from all advance, and bend his eyes backward on a beaten path—who would thrust canvas between him and the sky, and tradition between him and God.

And such conventional teaching is the more to be dreaded, because all that is highest in art, all that is creative and imaginative, is formed and created by every great master for himself, and cannot be repeated or imitated by others. We judge of the excellence of a rising writer, not so much by the resemblance of his works to what has been done before, as by their difference from it; and while we advise him, in his first trials of strength, to set certain models before him with respect to inferior points,—one for versification, another for arrangement, another for treatment,—we yet admit not his greatness until he has broken away from all his models, and struck forth versification, arrangement, and treatment of his own.

Three points, therefore, I would especially insist upon as necessary to be kept in mind in all criticism of modern art. First, that there are few, very few of even the best productions of antiquity, which are not visibly and palpably imperfect in some kind or way, and conceivably improvable by farther study; that every nation, perhaps every generation, has in all probability some peculiar gift, some particular character of mind, enabling it to do something different from, or something in some sort better than what has been before done; and that therefore, unless art be a trick, or a manufacture, of which the secrets are lost, the greatest minds of existing nations, if exerted with the same industry, passion, and honest aim as those of past time, have a chance in their particular walk of doing something as great, or, taking the advantage of former example into account, even greater and better. It is difficult to conceive by what laws of logic some of the reviewers of the following Essay have construed its first sentence into a denial of this principle,—a denial such as their own conventional and shallow criticism of modern works invariably implies. I have said that "nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration without possessing in a *high* degree *some* species of sterling excellence." Does it thence follow that it possesses in the *highest* degree *every* species of sterling excellence? "Yet thus," says the sapient reviewer, "he admits the fact against which he mainly argues,—namely, the superiority of these time-honored productions." As if the possession of an abstract excellence of some kind necessarily implied the possession of an incomparable excellence of every kind! There are few works of man so perfect as to admit of no conception of their being excelled,*—there are thousands which have been for centuries, and will be for centuries more, consecrated by public admiration, which are yet imperfect in many respects, and have been excelled, and may be excelled again. Do my opponents mean to assert that nothing good can ever be bettered, and that what is best of past time is necessarily best of all time? Perugino, I suppose, possessed some species of sterling excellence, but Perugino was excelled by Raffaelle; and so, Claude possesses some species of sterling excellence, but it follows not that he may not be excelled by Turner.

The second point on which I would insist is that if a mind *were* to arise of such power as to be capable of equalling or excelling some of the greatest works of past ages, the productions of such a mind would, in all probability, be totally different in manner and matter from all former productions;

---

* One or two fragments of Greek sculpture, the works of Michael Angelo, considered with reference to their general conception and power, and the Madonna di St. Sisto, are all that I should myself put into such a category, not that even these are without defect, but their defects are such as mortality could never hope to rectify.

for the more powerful the intellect, the less will its works resemble those of other men, whether predecessors or contemporaries. Instead of reasoning, therefore, as we commonly do, in matters of art, that because such and such a work does not resemble that which has hitherto been a canon, therefore it *must* be inferior and wrong in principle; let us rather admit that there is in its very dissimilarity an increased chance of its being itself a new, and perhaps, a higher canon. If any production of modern art can be shown to have the authority of nature on its side, and to be based on eternal truths, it is all so much more in its favor, so much farther proof of its power, that it is totally different from all that have been before seen.*

The third point on which I would insist, is that if such a mind were to arise, it would necessarily divide the world of criticism into two factions; the one, necessarily the largest and loudest, composed of men incapable of judging except by precedent, ignorant of general truth, and acquainted only with such particular truths as may have been illustrated or pointed out to them by former works, which class would of course be violent in vituperation, and increase in animosity as the master departed farther from their particular and preconceived canons of right,—thus wounding their vanity by impugning their judgment; the other, necessarily narrow of number, composed of men of general knowledge and unbiassed habits of thought, who would recognize in the work of the daring innovator a record and illustration of facts before un-seized, who would justly and candidly estimate the value of the truths so rendered, and would increase in fervor of admiration as the master strode farther and deeper, and more daringly into dominions before unsearched or unknown; yet diminishing in multitude as they increased in enthusiasm: for by how much their leader became more impatient in his step—more impetuous in his success—more exalting in his research, by so much must the number capable of following him become narrower, until at last, supposing him never to pause in his advance, he might be left in the very culminating moment of his consummate achievement, with but a faithful few by his side, his former disciples fallen away, his former enemies doubled in numbers and virulence, and the evidence of his supremacy only to be wrought out by the devotion of men's lives to the earnest study of the new truths he had discovered and recorded.

---

* This principle is dangerous, but not the less true, and necessary to be kept in mind. There is scarcely any truth which does not admit of being wrested to purposes of evil, and we must not deny the desirableness of originality, because men may err in seeking for it, or because a pretence to it may be made, by presumption, a cloak for its incompetence. Nevertheless, originality is never to be sought for its own sake—otherwise it will be mere aberration—it should arise naturally out of hard, independent study of nature; and it should be remembered that in many things technical, it is impossible to alter without being inferior, for therein, as says Spencer, "Truth is one, and right is ever one;" but wrongs are various and multitudinous. "Vice," says Byron, in Marino Faliero, "must have variety; but Virtue stands like the sun, and all which rolls around drinks life from her aspect."

Such a mind has arisen in our days. It has gone on from strength to strength, laying open fields of conquest peculiar to itself. It has occasioned such schism in the schools of criticism as was beforehand to be expected, and it is now at the zenith of its power, and, *consequently*, in the last phase of declining popularity.

This I know, and can prove. No man, says Southey, was ever yet convinced of any momentous truth without feeling in himself the power, as well as the desire of communicating it. In asserting and demonstrating the supremacy of this great master, I shall both do immediate service to the cause of right art, and shall be able to illustrate many principles of landscape painting which are of general application, and have hitherto been unacknowledged.

For anything like immediate effect on the public mind, I do not hope. "We mistake men's diseases," says Richard Baxter, "when we think there needeth nothing to cure them of their errors but the evidence of truth. Alas! there are many distempers of mind to be removed before they receive that evidence." Nevertheless, when it is fully laid before them, my duty will be done. Conviction will follow in due time.

I do not consider myself as in any way addressing, or having to do with, the ordinary critics of the press. Their writings are not the guide, but the expression, of public opinion. A writer for a newspaper naturally and necessarily endeavors to meet, as nearly as he can, the feelings of the majority of his readers; his bread depends on his doing so. Precluded by the nature of his occupations from gaining any knowledge of art, he is sure that he can gain credit for it by expressing the opinions of his readers. He mocks the picture which the public pass, and bespatters with praise the canvas which a crowd concealed from him.

Writers like the present critic of Blackwood's Magazine* deserve more respect—the respect due to honest, hopeless, helpless imbecility. There is something exalted in the innocence of their feeblemindedness: one cannot suspect them of partiality, for it implies feeling; nor of prejudice, for it implies some previous acquaintance with their subject. I do not know that even in this age of charlatanry, I could point to a more barefaced instance of imposture on the simplicity of the public, than the insertion of these pieces of criticism in a respectable periodical. We are not insulted with opinions on music from persons ignorant of its notes; nor with treatises on philology by persons unacquainted with the alphabet; but here is page after page of criticism, which one may read from end to end, looking for something which the writer knows, and finding nothing. Not his own language, for he has to look in his dictionary, by his own confession, for a word* occurring in one of the most important chapters of his Bible; not the commonest traditions of the schools, for he does not know why Poussin was called "learned;"† not the most simple canons of art, for he prefers Lee to Gainsborough;‡ not the most ordinary facts of nature, for we find him puzzled by the epithet "silver," as applied to the orange blossom,—evidently never having seen anything silvery about an orange in his life, except a spoon. Nay, he leaves us not to conjecture his calibre from internal evidence ; he candidly tells us (Oct. 1842) that he has been studying trees only for the last week, and bases his critical remarks chiefly on his practical experience of birch. More disinterested than our friend Sancho, he would disenchant the public from the magic of Turner by virtue of his own flagellation ; Xanthias-like, he would rob his master of immortality by his own powers of endurance. What is Christopher North about? Does he receive his critiques from Eaton or Harrow—based on the experience of a week's birds'-nesting and its consequences? How low must art and its interests sink, when the public mind is inadequate to the detection of this effrontery of incapacity! In all kindness to Maga, we warn her, that, though the nature of this work precludes us from devoting space to the exposure, there may come a time when the public shall be themselves able to distinguish ribaldry from reasoning, and

---

* It is with regret that, in a work of this nature, I take notice of criticisms, which, after all, are merely intended to amuse the careless reader, and be forgotten as soon as read; but I do so in compliance with wishes expressed to me since the publication of this work, by persons who have the interests of art deeply at heart, and who, I find, attach more importance to the matter than I should have been disposed to do. I have, therefore, marked two or three passages which may enable the public to judge for themselves of the quality of these critiques; and this I think a matter of justice to those who might otherwise have been led astray by them—more than this I cannot consent to do. I should have but a hound's office if I had to tear the tabard from every Rouge Sanglier of the arts—with bell and bauble to back him.

---

* Chrysoprase (Vide No. for October, 1842, p. 502.)

† Every school-boy knows that this epithet was given to Poussin in allusion to the profound classical knowledge of the painter. The reviewer, however (September, 1841), informs us that the expression refers to his skill in "Composition."

‡ Critique on Royal Academy, 1842. "He" (Mr. Lee) "often reminds us of Gainsborough's best manner; but he is *superior* to him always in subject, composition, and variety."—Shade of Gainsborough! —deep-thoughted, solemn Gainsborough—forgive us for re-writing this sentence; we do so to gibbet its perpetrator forever,—and leave him swinging in the winds of the Fool's Paradise. It is with great pain that I ever speak with severity of the works of living masters, especially when, like Mr. Lee's, they are well-intentioned, simple, free from affectation or imitation, and evidently painted with constant reference to nature. But I believe that these qualities will always secure him that admiration which he deserves—that there will be many unsophisticated and honest minds always ready to follow his guidance, and answer his efforts with delight; and therefore, that I need not fear to point out in him the want of those technical qualities which are more especially the object of an artist's admiration. Gainsborough's power of color (it is mentioned by Sir Joshua as his peculiar gift) is capable of taking rank beside that of Rubens; he is the purest colorist—Sir Joshua himself not excepted—of the whole English school; with him, in fact, the *art* of painting did in great part die, and exists not now in Europe. Evidence enough will be seen in the following pages of my devoted admiration of Turner; but I hesitate not to say, that in management and quality of single and particular tint, in the purely technical part of painting. Turner is a child of Gainsborough. Now, Mr. Lee never aims at color; he does not make it his object in the slightest degree—the spring green of vegetation is all that he desires; and it would be about as rational to compare his works with studied pieces of coloring, as the modulation of the Calabrian pipe to the harmony of a full orchestra. Gainsborough's hand is as light as the sweep of a cloud—as swift as the flash of a sunbeam; Lee's execution is feeble and spotty. Gainsborough's masses are as broad as the first division in heaven of light from darkness; Lee's (perhaps necessarily, considering the effects of flickering sunlight at which he aims) are as fragmentary as his leaves, and as numerous. Gainsborough's forms

are grand, simple, and ideal ; Lee's are small. confused, and unselected. Gainsborough never loses sight of his picture as a whole ; Lee is but too apt to be shackled by its parts. In a word, Gainsborough is an immortal painter ; and Lee, though on the right road, is yet in the early stages of his art ; and the man who could imagine any resemblance or point of comparison between them, is not only a novice in art, but has not capacity ever to be anything more. He may be pardoned for not comprehending Turner, for long preparation and discipline are necessary before the abstract and profound philosophy of that artist can be met ; but Gainsborough's excellence is based on principles of art long acknowledged, and facts of nature universally apparent ; and I insist more particularly on the reviewer's want of feeling for his works, because it proves a truth of which the public ought especially to be assured that those who lavish abuse on the great men of modern times, are equally incapable of perceiving the real excellence of established canons, are ignorant of the commonest and most acknowledged principia of the art, blind to the most palpable and comprehensible of its beauties, incapable of distinguishing, if left to themselves, a master's work from the vilest school copy, and founding their applause of those great works which they praise, either in pure hypocrisy, or in admiration of their defects.

may require some better and higher qualifications in their critics of art, than the experience of a school-boy, and the capacities of a buffoon.

It is not, however, merely to vindicate the reputation of those whom writers like these defame, which would but be to anticipate by a few years the natural and inevitable reaction of the public mind, that I am devoting years of labor to the development of the principles on which the great productions of recent art are based. I have a higher end in view —one which may, I think, justify me, not only in the sacrifice of my own time, but in calling on my readers to follow me through an investigation far more laborious than could be adequately rewarded by mere insight into the merits of a particular master, or the spirit of a particular age.

It is a question which, in spite of the claims of Painting to be called the Sister of Poetry, appears to me to admit of considerable doubt, whether art has ever, except in its earliest and rudest stages, possessed anything like efficient moral influence on mankind. Better the state of Rome when "magnorum artificum frangebat pocula miles, ut phaleris gauderet equus," than when her walls flashed with the marble and the gold, "nec cessabat luxuria id agere, ut quam plurimum incendiis perdat." Better the state of religion in Italy, before Giotto had broken on one barbarism of the Byzantine schools, than when the painter of the Last Judgment, and the sculptor of the Perseus, sat revelling side by side. It appears to me that a rude symbol is oftener more efficient than a refined one in touching the heart, and that as pictures rise in rank as works of art, they are regarded with less devotion and more curiosity.

But, however this may be, and whatever influence we may be disposed to admit in the great works of sacred art, no doubt can, I think, be reasonably entertained as to the utter inutility of all that has been hitherto accomplished by the painters of landscape. No moral end has been answered, no permanent good effected, by any of their works. They may have amused the intellect, or exercised the ingenuity, but they never have spoken to the heart. Landscape art has never taught us one deep or holy lesson ; it has not recorded that which is fleeting, nor penetrated that which was hidden, nor interpreted that which was obscure ; it has never made us feel the wonder, nor the power, nor the glory, of the universe ; it has not prompted to devotion, nor touched with awe ; its power to move and exalt the heart has been fatally abused, and perished in the abusing. That which ought to have been a witness to the omnipotence of God, has become an exhibition of the dexterity of man, and that which should have lifted our thoughts to the throne of the Deity, has encumbered them with the inventions of his creatures.

If we stand for a little time before any of the more celebrated works of landscape, listening to the comments of the passers-by, we shall hear numberless expressions relating to the skill of the artist, but very few relating to the perfection of nature. Hundreds will be voluble in admiration, for one who will be silent in delight. Multitudes will laud the composition, and depart with the praise of Claude on their lips,—not one will feel as if it were *no* composition, and depart with the praise of God in his heart.

These are the signs of a debased, mistaken, and false school of painting. The skill of the artist, and the perfection of his art, are never proved until both are forgotten. The artist has done nothing till he has concealed himself,—the art is imperfect which is visible,—the feelings are but feebly touched, if they permit us to reason on the methods of their excitement. In the reading of a great poem, in the hearing of a noble oration, it is the subject of the writer, and not his skill,—his passion, not his power, on which our minds are fixed. We see as he sees, but we see not him. We become part of him, feel with him, judge, behold with him ; but we think *of* him as little as of ourselves. Do we think of Æschylus while we wait on the silence of Cassandra,* or of Shakspeare, while we listen to the wailing of

---

* There is a fine touch in the Frogs in Aristophanes, alluding probably to this part of the Agamemnon. "'Εγὼ δ' ἔχαιρον τῇ σιωπῇ καὶ με τοῦτ' ἔτερπεν οὐκ ἧττον ἢ νῦν δι λαλοῦντες." The same remark

Lear? Not so. The power of the masters is shown by their self-annihilation. It is commensurate with the degree in which they themselves appear not in their work. The harp of the minstrel is untruly touched, if his own glory is all that it records. Every great writer may be at once known by his guiding the mind far from himself, to the beauty which is not of his creation, and the knowledge which is past his finding out.

And must it ever be otherwise with painting, for otherwise it has ever been. Her subjects have been regarded as mere themes on which the artist's power is to be displayed; and that power, be it of imitation, composition, idealization, or of whatever other kind, is the chief object of the spectator's observation. It is man and his fancies, man and his trickeries, man and his inventions,—poor, paltry, weak, self-sighted man,—which the connoisseur forever seeks and worships. Among potsherds and dunghills, among drunken boors and withered beldames, through every scene of debauchery and degradation, we follow the erring artist, not to receive one wholesome lesson, not to be touched with pity, nor moved with indignation, but to watch the dexterity of the pencil, and gloat over the glittering of the hue.

I speak not only of the works of the Flemish school—I wage no war with their admirers; they may be left in peace to count the spiculæ of haystacks and the hairs of donkeys—it is also of works of real mind that I speak,—works in which there are evidences of genius and workings of power,—works which have been held up as containing all of the beautiful that art can reach or man conceive. And I assert with sorrow, that all hitherto done in landscape, by those commonly conceived its masters, has never prompted one

---

might be well applied to the seemingly vacant or incomprehensible portions of Turner's canvas. In their mysterious and intense fire, there is much correspondence between the mind of Æschylus and that of our great painter. They share at least one thing in common—unpopularity. ʽΟ δημος ἀνεβόα κρίσιν ποιεῖν ΞΛ. ὁ τῶν πανοὺργων; ΑΙ. νη Δι. οὐράνιον γ' ὅσον. ΞΑ. μετ' Αἰσχύλου δ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἕτεροι σύμμαχοι ΑΙ. ὀλίγον τὸ χρηστόν ἐστιν.

holy thought in the minds of nations. It has begun and ended in exhibiting the dexterities of individuals, and conventionalities of systems. Filling the world with the honor of Claude and Salvator, it has never once tended to the honor of God.

Does the reader start in reading these last words, as if they were those of wild enthusiasm,—as if I were lowering the dignity of religion by supposing that its cause could be advanced by such means? His surprise proves my position. It *does* sound like wild, like absurd enthusiasm, to expect any definite moral agency in the painters of landscape; but ought it so to sound? Are the gorgeousness of the visible hue, the glory of the realized form, instruments in the artist's hand so ineffective, that they can answer no nobler purpose than the amusement of curiosity, or the engagement of idleness? Must it not be owing to gross neglect or misapplication of the means at his command, that while words and tones (means of representing nature surely less powerful than lines and colors) can kindle and purify the very inmost souls of men, the painter can only hope to entertain by his efforts at expression, and must remain forever brooding over his incommunicable thoughts?

The cause of the evil lies, I believe, deep-seated in the system of ancient landscape art; it consists, in a word, in the painter's taking upon him to modify God's works at his pleasure, casting the shadow of himself on all he sees, constituting himself arbiter where it is honor to be a disciple, and exhibiting his ingenuity by the attainment of combinations whose highest praise is that they are impossible. We shall not pass through a single gallery of old art, without hearing this topic of praise confidently advanced. The sense of artificialness, the absence of all appearance of reality, the clumsiness of combination by which the meddling of man is made evident, and the feebleness of his hand branded on the inorganization of his monstrous creature, is advanced as a proof of inventive power, as an evidence of abstracted conception;—nay, the violation of specific form, the utter abandonment of all organic and individual character of object, (numberless examples of which from the works of the old masters are given in the following pages,) is constantly held up by the unthinking critic as the foundation of the grand or historical style, and the first step to the attainment of a pure ideal. Now, there is but one grand style, in the treatment of all subjects whatsoever, and that style is based on the *perfect* knowledge, and consists in the simple, unencumbered rendering, of the specific characters of the given object, be it man, beast, or flower. Every change, caricature, or abandonment of such specific character, is as destructive of grandeur as it is of truth, of beauty as of propriety. Every alteration of the features of nature has its origin either in powerless indolence or blind audacity, in the folly which forgets, or the insolence which desecrates, works which it is the pride of angels to know, and their privilege to love.

We sometimes hear such infringement of universal laws justified on the plea, that the frequent introduction of mythological abstractions into ancient landscape requires an imaginary character of form in the material objects with which they are associated. Something of this kind is hinted in Reynolds's 14th Discourse; but nothing can be more false than such reasoning. If there be any truth or beauty in the original conception of the spiritual being so introduced, there must be a true and real connection between that abstract idea* and the features of nature as she was and is. The woods and waters which were peopled by the Greek with typical life were not different from those which now wave and murmur by the ruins of his shrines. With their visible and actual forms was his imagination filled, and the beauty of its incarnate creatures can only be understood among the pure realities which originally modelled their conception. If divinity be stamped upon the features, or apparent in the form of the spiritual creature, the mind will not be shocked by its appearing to ride upon the whirlwind, and trample on the storm ; but if mortality, no violation of the characters of the earth will forge one single link to bind it to the heaven.

---

* I do not know any passage in ancient literature in which this connection is more exquisitely illustrated than in the lines, burlesque though they be, descriptive of the approach of the chorus in the Clouds of Aristophanes—a writer, by the way, who, I believe, knew and felt more of the noble landscape character of his country than any whose works have come down to us except Homer. The individuality and distinctness of conception—the visible cloud character which every word of this particular passage brings out into more dewy and bright existence, are to me as refreshing as the real breathing of mountain winds. The line "διὰ τῶν κοίλων καὶ τῶν δασέων, πλάγιαι," could have been written by none but an ardent lover of hill scenery—one who had watched, hour after hour, the peculiar oblique, side-long action of descending clouds, as they form along the hollows and ravines of the hills. There are no lumpish solidities—no pillowy protuberances here. All is melting, drifting, evanescent—full of air, and light, and dew.

Is there then no such thing as elevated ideal character of landscape? Undoubtedly; and Sir Joshua, with the great master of this character, Nicolo Poussin, present to his thoughts, ought to have arrived at more true conclusions respecting its essence than, as we shall presently see, are deducible from his works. The true ideal of landscape is precisely the same as that of the human form ; it is the expression of the specific—not the individual, but the specific—characters of every object, in their perfection ; there is an ideal form of every herb, flower, and tree: it is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease. Every landscape painter should know the specific characters of every object he has to represent, rock, flower, or cloud ; and in his highest ideal works, all their distinctions will be perfectly expressed, broadly or delicately, slightly or completely, according to the nature of the subject, and the degree of attention which is to be drawn to the particular object by the part it plays in the composition. Where the sublime is aimed at, such distinctions will be indicated with severe simplicity, as the muscular markings in a colossal statue ; where beauty is the object, they must be expressed with the utmost refinement of which the hand is capable.

This may sound like a contradiction of principles advanced by the highest authorities; but it is only a contradiction of a particular and most mistaken application of them. Much evil has been done to art by the remarks of historical painters on landscape. Accustomed themselves to treat their backgrounds slightly and boldly, and feeling (though, as I shall presently show, only in consequence of their own deficient powers) that any approach to completeness of detail therein, injures their picture by interfering with its principal subject, they naturally lose sight of the peculiar and intrinsic beauties of things which to them are injurious, unless subordinate. Hence the frequent advice given by Reynolds and others, to neglect *specific* form in landscape, and treat its materials in large masses, aiming only at general truths,—the flexibility of foliage, but not its kind; the rigidity of rock, but not its mineral character. In the passage more especially bearing on this subject (in the eleventh lecture of Sir J. Reynolds), we are told that "the landscape painter works not for the virtuoso or the naturalist, but for the general observer of life and nature." This is true, in precisely the same sense that the sculptor does not work for the anatomist, but for the common observer of life and nature. Yet the sculptor is not, for this reason, permitted to be wanting either in knowledge or expression of anatomical detail; and the more refined that expression can be rendered, the more perfect is his work. That which, to the anatomist, is the end,—is, to the sculptor, the means. The former desires details, for their own sake; the latter, that by means of them, he may kindle his work with life, and stamp it with beauty. And so in landscape;—botanical or geological details are not to be given as matter of curiosity or subject of search, but as the ultimate elements of every species of expression and order of loveliness.

In his observations on the foreground of the St. Pietro Martire, Sir Joshua advances, as matter of praise, that the plants are discriminated "just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more." Had this foreground been occupied by a group of animals, we should have been surprised to be told that the lion, the serpent, and the dove, or whatever other creatures might have been introduced, were distinguished from each other just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more. Yet is it to be supposed that the distinctions of the vegetable world are less complete, less essential, or less divine in origin, than those of the animal? If the distinctive forms of animal life are meant for our reverent observance, is it likely that those of vegetable life are made merely to be swept away? The latter are indeed less obvious and less obtrusive; for which very reason there is less excuse for omitting them, because there is less danger of their disturbing the attention or engaging the fancy.

But Sir Joshua is as inaccurate in fact, as false in principle. He himself furnishes a most singular instance of the very error of which he accuses Vaseni,—the seeing what he expects; or, rather, in the present case, not seeing what he does not expect. The great masters of Italy, almost without exception, and Titian perhaps more than any (for he had the highest knowledge of landscape), are in the constant habit of rendering every detail of their foregrounds with the most laborious botanical fidelity: witness the "Bacchus and Ariadne," in which the foreground is occupied by the common blue iris, the aquilegia, and the wild rose; *every stamen* of which latter is given, while the blossoms and leaves of the columbine (a difficult flower to draw) have been studied with the most exquisite accuracy. The foregrounds of Raffaelle's two cartoons—"The Miraculous Draught of Fishes" and "The Charge to Peter"—are covered with plants of the common sea colewort (*crambe maritima*), of which the sinuated leaves and clustered blossoms would have exhausted the patience of any other artist; but have appeared worthy of prolonged and thoughtful labor to the great mind of Raffaelle.

It appears then, not only from natural principles, but from the highest of all authority, that thorough knowledge of the lowest details is necessary and full expression of them right, even in the highest class of historical painting; that it will not take away from, nor interfere with, the interest of the figures; but, rightly managed, must add to and elucidate it; and, if further proof be wanting, I would desire the reader to compare the background of Sir Joshua's "Holy Family," in the National Gallery, with that of Nicolo Poussin's

"Nursing of Jupiter," in the Dulwich Gallery. The first, owing to the utter neglect of all botanical detail, has lost every atom of ideal character, and reminds us of nothing but an English fashionable flower garden ;—the formal pedestal adding considerably to the effect. Poussin's, in which every vine leaf is drawn with consummate skill and untiring diligence, produces not only a tree group of the most perfect grace and beauty, but one which, in its pure and simple truth, belongs to every age of nature, and adapts itself to the history of all time. If, then, such entire rendering of specific character be necessary to the historical painter, in cases where these lower details are entirely subordinate to his human subject, how much more must it be necessary in landscape, where they themselves constitute the subject, and where the undivided attention is to be drawn to them.

There is a singular sense in which the child may peculiarly be said to be father of the man. In many arts and attainments, the first and last stages of progress—the infancy and the consummation—have many features in common ; while the intermediate stages are wholly unlike either, and are farthest from the right. Thus it is in the progress of a painter's handling. We see the perfect child,—the absolute beginner, using of necessity a broken, imperfect, inadequate line, which, as he advances, becomes gradually firm, severe, and decided. Yet before he becomes a perfect artist, this severity and decision will again be exchanged for a light and careless stroke, which in many points will far more resemble that of his childhood than of his middle age—differing from it only by the consummate effect wrought out by the apparently inadequate means. So it is in many matters of opinion. Our first and last coincide, though on different grounds ; it is the middle stage which is farthest from the truth. Childhood often holds a truth with its feeble fingers, which the grasp of manhood cannot retain,—which it is the pride of utmost age to recover.

Perhaps this is in no instance more remarkable than in the opinion we form upon the subject of detail in works of art. Infants in judgment, we look for specific character, and complete finish—we delight in the faithful plumage of the well-known bird—in the finely drawn leafage of the discriminated flower. As we advance in judgment, we scorn such detail altogether; we look for impetuosity of execution, and breadth of effect. But, perfected in judgment, we return in a great measure to our early feelings, and thank Raffaelle for the shells upon his sacred beach, and for the delicate stamens of the herbage beside his inspired St. Catherine.*

Of those who take interest in art, nay, even of artists themselves, there are an hundred in the middle stage of judgment, for one who is in the last; and this not because they are destitute of the power to discover or the sensibility to enjoy the truth, but because the truth bears so much semblance of error—the last stage of the journey to the first,—that every feeling which guides to it is checked in its origin. The rapid and powerful artist necessarily looks with such contempt on those who seek minutiæ of detail *rather* than grandeur of impression, that it is almost impossible for him to conceive of the great last step in art, by which both become compatible. He has so often to dash the delicacy out of the pupil's work, and to blot the details from his encumbered canvas; so frequently to lament the loss of breadth and unity, and so seldom to reprehend the imperfection of minutæ, that he necessarily looks upon complete *parts* as the very sign of error, weakness and ignorance. Thus, frequently to the latest period of his life, he separates, like Sir Joshua, as chief enemies, the details and the whole, which an artist cannot be great unless he reconciles; and because details alone, and unreferred to a final purpose, are the sign of a tyro's work, he loses sight of the remoter truth, that details perfect in unity, and, contributing to a final purpose, are the sign of the production of a consummate master.

---

* Let not this principle be confused with Fuseli's, "love for what is called deception in painting marks either the infancy or decrepitude of a nation's taste." Realization to the mind necessitates not deception of the eye.

It is not, therefore, detail sought for its own sake,—not the calculable bricks of the Dutch house-painters, nor the numbered hairs and mapped wrinkles of Denner, which constitute great art,—they are the lowest and most contemptible art; but it is detail referred to a great end,—sought for the sake of the inestimable beauty which exists in the slightest and least of God's works, and treated in a manly, broad and impressive manner. There may be as much greatness of mind, as much nobility of manner in a master's treatment of the smallest features, as in his management of the most vast; and this greatness of manner chiefly consists in seizing the specific character of the object, together with all the great qualities of beauty which it has in common with higher orders of existence,* while he utterly rejects the meaner beauties which are accidentally peculiar to the object, and yet not specifically characteristic of it. I cannot give a better instance than the painting of the flowers in Titian's picture above mentioned. While every stamen of the rose is given, because this was necessary to mark the flower, and while the curves and large characters of the leaves are rendered with exquisite fidelity, there is no vestige of particular texture, of moss, bloom, moisture, or any other accident—no dew-drops, nor flies, nor trickeries of any kind; nothing beyond the simple forms and hues of the flowers,—even those hues themselves being simplified and broadly rendered. The varieties of aquilegia have, in reality, a grayish and uncertain tone of color; and, I believe, never attain the intense purity of blue with which Titian has gifted his flower. But the master does not aim at the particular color of individual blossoms; he seizes the type of all, and gives it with the utmost purity and simplicity of which color is capable.

These laws being observed, it will not only be in the power, it will be the duty,—the imperative duty,—of the landscape painter, to descend to the lowest details with undiminish attention. Every herb and flower of the field has its speci distinct, and perfect beauty; it has its peculiar habitation, expression and function. The highest art is that which seizes this specific character, which develops and illustrates it, which assigns to it its proper position in the landscape, and which, by means of it, enhances and enforces the great impression which the picture is intended to convey. Nor is it of herbs and flowers alone that such scientific representation is required. Every class of rock, every kind of earth, every form of cloud, must be studied with equal industry, and rendered with equal precision. And thus we find ourselves unavoidably led to a conclusion directly opposed to that constantly enunciated dogma of the parrot-critic, that the features of nature must be "generalized,"—a dogma whose inherent and broad absurdity would long ago have been detected, if it had not contained in its convenient falsehood an apology for indolence, and a disguise for incapacity. Generalized! As if it were possible to generalize things generically different. Of such common cant of criticism I extract a characteristic passage from one of the reviews of this work, that in this year's Athenæum for February 10th: "He (the author) would have geological landscape painters, dendrologic, meteorologic, and doubtless entomologic, ichthyologic, every kind of physiologic painter united in the same person; yet, alas, for true poetic art among all these learned Thebans! No; landscape painting must not be reduced to mere portraiture of inanimate substances, Denner-like portraiture of the earth's face. * * * * * Ancient landscapists took a broader, deeper, higher view of their art; they neglected particular traits, and gave only general features. Thus they attained mass and force, harmonious union and simple effect, the elements of grandeur and beauty.

---

* I shall show, in a future portion of the work, that there are principles of universal beauty common to all the creatures of God; and that it is by the greater or less share of these that one form becomes nobler or meaner than another.

To all such criticism as this (and I notice it only because it expresses the feelings into which many sensible and thoughtful minds have been fashioned by infection) the answer is simple and straightforward. It is just as impossible to generalize granite and slate, as it is to generalize a man and a cow. An animal must be either one animal or another animal; it cannot be a general animal, or it is no animal; and so a rock must be either one rock or another rock; it cannot be a general rock, or it is no rock. If there were a creature in the foreground of a picture, of which he could not decide whether it were a pony or a pig, the Athenæum critic would perhaps affirm it to be a generalization of pony and pig, and consequently a high example of "harmonious union and simple effect." But *I* should call it simple bad drawing. And so when there are things in the foreground of Salvator of which I cannot pronounce whether they be granite or slate, or tufa, I affirm that there is in them neither harmonious union nor simple effect, but simple monstrosity. There is no grandeur, no beauty of any sort or kind; nothing but destruction, disorganization, and ruin, to be obtained by the violation of natural distinctions. The elements of brutes can only mix in corruption, the elements of inorganic nature only in annihilation. We may, if we choose, put together centaur monsters; but they must still be half man, half horse; they cannot be both man and horse, nor either man or horse. And so, if landscape painters choose, they may give us rocks which shall be half granite and half slate; but they cannot give us rocks which shall be either granite or slate, nor which shall be both granite and slate. Every attempt to produce that which shall be *any* rock, ends in the production of that which is *no* rock.

It is true that the distinctions of rocks and plants and clouds are less conspicuous, and less constantly subjects of observation than those of the animal creation; but the difficulty of observing them proves not the merit of overlooking them. It only accounts for the singular fact, that the world has never yet seen anything like a perfect school of landscape. For just as the highest historical painting is based on perfect knowledge of the workings of the human form and human mind, so must the highest landscape painting be based on perfect cognizance of the form, functions, and system of every organic or definitely structured existence which it has to represent. This proposition is self-evident to every thinking mind; and every principle which appears to contradict it is either misstated or misunderstood. For instance, the Athenæum critic calls the right statement of generic difference "*Denner*-like portraiture." If he can find anything like Denner in what I have advanced as the utmost perfection of landscape art—the recent works of Turner—he is welcome to his discovery and his theory. No; Denner-like portraiture would be the endeavor to paint the separate crystals of quartz and felspar in the granite, and the separate flakes of mica in the mica slate,—an attempt just as far removed from what I assert to be great art, (the bold rendering of the generic characters of form in both rocks,) as modern sculpture of lace and button-holes is from the Elgin marbles. Martin has attempted this Denner-like portraiture of sea-foam with the assistance of an acre of canvas—with what success, I believe the critics of his last year's Canute had, for once, sense enough to decide.

Again, it does not follow that because such accurate knowledge is *necessary* to the painter that it should constitute the painter, nor that such knowledge is valuable in itself, and without reference to high ends. Every kind of knowledge may be sought from ignoble motives, and for ignoble ends; and in those who so possess it, it is ignoble knowledge; while the very same knowledge is in another mind an attainment of the highest dignity, and conveying the greatest blessing. This is the difference between the mere botanist's knowledge of plants, and the great poet's or painter's knowledge of them. The one notes their distinctions for the sake of swelling his herbarium, the other, that he may render them vehicles of expression and emotion. The one counts the stamens, and affixes a name, and is content; the other observes every character of the plant's color and form; considering each of its attributes as an element of expression, he seizes on its lines of grace or energy, rigidity or repose; notes the feebleness or the vigor, the serenity or tremulousness of its hues; observes its local habits, its love or fear of peculiar places, its nourishment or destruction by particular influences; he associates it in his mind with all the features of the situations it inhabits, and the ministering agencies necessary to its support. Thenceforward the flower is to him a living creature, with histories written on its leaves, and passions breathing in its motion. Its occurrence in his picture is no mere point of color, no meaningless spark of light. It is a voice rising from the earth,—a new chord of the mind's music,—a necessary note in the harmony of his picture, contributing alike to its tenderness and its dignity, nor less to its loveliness than its truth.

The particularization of flowers by Shakspeare and Shelley affords us the most frequent examples of the exalted use of these inferior details. It is true that the painter has not the same power of expressing the thoughts with which his symbols are connected ; he is dependent in some degree on the knowledge and feeling of the spectator ; but, by the destruction of such details, his foreground is not rendered more intelligible to the ignorant, although it ceases to have interest for the informed. It is no excuse for illegible writing that there are persons who could not have read it had it been plain.

I repeat then, generalization, as the word is commonly understood, is the act of a vulgar, incapable, and unthinking mind. To see in all mountains nothing but similar heaps of earth ; in all rocks, nothing but similar concretions of solid matter ; in all trees, nothing but similar accumulations of leaves, is no sign of high feeling or extended thought. The more we know, and the more we feel, the more we separate ; we separate to obtain a more perfect unity. Stones, in the thoughts of the peasant, lie as they do on his field, one is like another, and there is no connection between any of them. The geologist distinguishes, and in distinguishing connects them. Each becomes different from its fellow, but in differing from, assumes a relation to its fellow ; they are no more each the repetition of the other,—they are parts of a system, and each implies and is connected with the existence of the rest. That generalization then is right, true, and noble, which is based on the knowledge of the distinctions and observance of the relations of individual kinds. That generalization is wrong, false, and contemptible, which is based on ignorance of the one, and disturbance of the other. It is indeed no generalization, but confusion and chaos; it is the generalization of a defeated army into indistinguishable impotence—the generalization of the elements of a dead carcass into dust.

Let us, then, without farther notice of the dogmata of the schools of art, follow forth those conclusions to which we are led by observance of the laws of nature.

I have just said that every class of rock, earth and cloud, must be known by the painter, with geologic and meteorologic accuracy.* Nor is this merely for the sake of obtaining the character of these minor features themselves, but more especially for the sake of reaching that simple, earnest, and consistent character which is visible in the *whole* effect of every natural landscape. Every geological formation has features entirely peculiar to itself; definite lines of fracture, giving rise to fixed resultant forms of rock and earth; peculiar vegetable products, among which still farther distinctions are wrought out by variations of climate and elevation. From such modifying circumstances arise the infinite varieties of the orders of landscape, of which each one shows perfect harmony among its several features, and possesses an ideal beauty of its own; a beauty not distinguished merely by such peculiarities as are wrought on the human form by change of climate, but by generic differences the most marked and essential; so that its classes cannot be generalized or amalgamated by any expedients whatsoever. The level marshes and rich meadows of the tertiary, the rounded swells and short pastures of the chalk, the square-built cliffs and cloven dells of the lower limestone, the soaring peaks and ridgy precipices of the primaries, having nothing in common among them—nothing which is not distinctive and incommunicable. Their very atmospheres are different—their clouds are different—their humors of storm and sunshine are different—their flowers, animals and forests are different. By each order of landscape—and its orders, I repeat, are infinite in number, corresponding not only to the several species of rock, but to the particular circumstances of the rocks' deposition or after treatment, and to the incalculable varieties of climate, aspect, and human interference :—by each order of landscape, I say, peculiar lessons are intended to be taught, and distinct pleasures to be conveyed ; and it is as utterly futile to talk of generalizing their impressions into an ideal landscape, as to talk of amalgamating all nourishment into one ideal food, gathering all music into one ideal movement, or confounding all thought into one ideal idea.

---

* Is not this—it may be asked—demanding more from him than life can accomplish? Not one whit. Nothing more than knowledge of external characteristics is absolutely required; and even if, which were more desirable, thorough scientific knowledge had to be attained, the time which our artists spend in multiplying crude sketches, or finishing their unintelligent embryos of the study, would render them masters of every science that modern investigations have organized, and familiar with every form that Nature manifests. Martin, if the time which he must have spent on the abortive bubbles of his Canute had been passed in working on the seashore, might have learned enough to enable him to produce, with a few strokes, a picture which would have smote like the sound of the sea, upon men's hearts forever.

There is, however, such a thing as composition of different orders of landscape, though there can be no generalization of them. Nature herself perpetually brings together elements of various expression. Her barren rocks stoop through wooded promontories to the plain ; and the wreaths of the vine show through their green shadows the wan light of unperishing snow.

The painter, therefore, has the choice of either working out the isolated character of some one distinct class of scene, or of bringing together a multitude of different elements, which may adorn each other by contrast.

I believe that the simple and uncombined landscape, if wrought out with due attention to the ideal beauty of the features it includes, will always be the most powerful in its appeal to the heart. Contrast increases the splendor of beauty, but it disturbs its influence ; it adds to its attractiveness, but diminishes its power. On this subject I shall have much to say hereafter ; at present I merely wish to suggest the possibility, that the single-minded painter, who is working out on broad and simple principles, a piece of unbroken, harmonious landscape character, may be reaching an end in art quite as high as the more ambitious student who is always "within five minutes' walk of everywhere," making the ends of the earth contribute to his pictorial guazzetto ;* and the certainty, that unless the composition of the latter be regulated by severe judgment, and its members connected by natural links, it must become more contemptible in its motley, than an honest study of road-side weeds.

Let me, at the risk of tediously repeating what is universally known, refer to the common principles of historical composition, in order that I may show their application to that of landscape. The merest tyro in art knows that every figure which is unnecessary to his picture, is an encumbrance to it, and that every figure which does not sympathize with the action, interrupts it. He that gathereth not with me, scattereth,—is, or ought to be, the ruling principle of his plan : and the power and grandeur of his result will be exactly proportioned to the unity of feeling manifested in its several parts, and to the propriety and simplicity of the relations in which they stand to each other.

All this is equally applicable to the materials of inanimate nature. Impressiveness is destroyed by a multitude of contradictory facts, and the accumulation, which is not harmonious, is discordant. He who endeavors to unite simplicity with magnificence, to guide from solitude to festivity, and to contrast melancholy with mirth, must end by the production of confused inanity. There is a peculiar spirit possessed by every kind of scene ; and although a point of contrast may sometimes enhance and exhibit this particular feeling more intensely, it must be only a point, not an equalized opposition. Every introduction of new and different feeling weakens the force of what has already been impressed, and the mingling of all emotions must conclude in apathy, as the mingling of all colors in white.

---

* "A green field is a sight which makes us pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction
Which mixes up vines, olive, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanoes, oranges, and ices."—*Don Juan.*

Let us test by these simple rules one of the "ideal" landscape compositions of Claude, that known to the Italians as "Il Mulino."

The foreground is a piece of very lovely and perfect forest scenery, with a dance of peasants by a brookside; quite enough subject to form, in the hands of a master, an impressive and complete picture. On the other side of the brook, however, we have a piece of pastoral life, a man with some bulls and goats tumbling headforemost into the water, owing to some sudden paralytic affection of all their legs. Even this group is one too many; the shepherd had no business to drive his flock so near the dancers, and the dancers will certainly frighten the cattle. But when we look farther into the picture, our feelings receive a sudden and violent shock, by the unexpected appearance, amidst things pastoral and musical, of the military: a number of Roman soldiers riding in on hobby-horses, with a leader on foot, apparently encouraging them to make an immediate and decisive charge on the musicians. Beyond the soldiers is a circular temple, in exceedingly bad repair, and close beside it, built against its very walls, a neat water-mill in full work. By the mill flows a large river, with a weir all across it. The weir has not been made for the mill, (for that receives its water from the hills by a trough carried over the temple,) but it is particularly ugly and monotonous in its line of fall, and the water below forms a dead-looking pond, on which some people are fishing in punts. The banks of this river resemble in contour the later geological formations around London, constituted chiefly of broken pots and oyster-shells. At an inconvenient distance from the water-side stands a city, composed of twenty-five round towers and a pyramid. Beyond the city is a handsome bridge; beyond the bridge, part of the Campagna, with fragments of aqueducts; beyond the Campagna, the chain of the Alps; on the left, the cascades of Tivoli.

This is, I believe, a fair example of what is commonly called an "ideal landscape," *i.e.*, a group of the artist's studies from nature, individually spoiled, selected with such opposition of character as may insure their neutralizing each other's effect, and united with sufficient unnaturalness and violence of association to insure their producing a general sensation of the impossible. Let us analyze the separate subjects a little in this ideal work of Claude's.

Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men.* The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep; scattered blocks of black stone, four-square, remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down. A dull purple, poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of massy ruins, on whose rents the red light rests like dying fire on defiled altars. The blue ridge of the Alban mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky. Watch-towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave.

Let us, with Claude, make a few "ideal" alterations in this landscape. First, we will reduce the multitudinous precipices of the Apennines to four sugar-loaves. Secondly, we will remove the Alban mount, and put a large dust-heap in its stead. Next, we will knock down the greater part of the aqueducts, and leave only an arch or two, that their infinity of length may no longer be painful from its monotony. For the purple mist and declining sun we will substitute a bright blue sky, with round white clouds. Finally, we will get rid of the unpleasant ruins in the foreground; we will plant some handsome trees therein, we will send for some fiddlers, and get up a dance, and a picnic party.

---

* The vegetable soil of the Campagna is chiefly formed by decomposed lavas, and under it lies a bed of white pumice, exactly resembling remnants of bones.

It will be found, throughout the picture, that the same species of improvement is made on the materials which Claude had ready to his hand. The descending slopes of the city of Rome, towards the pyramid of Caius Cestius, supply not only lines of the most exquisite variety and beauty, but matter for contemplation and reflection in every fragment of their buildings. This passage has been idealized by Claude into a set of similar round towers, respecting which no idea can be formed but that they are uninhabitable, and to which no interest can be attached, beyond the difficulty of conjecturing what they could have been built for. The ruins of the temple are rendered unimpressive by the juxtaposition of the water-mill, and inexplicable by the introduction of the Roman soldiers. The glide of the muddy streams of the melancholy Tiber and Anio through the Campagna is impressive in itself, but altogether ceases to be so, when we disturb their stillness of motion by a weir, adorn their neglected flow with a handsome bridge, and cover their solitary surface with punts, nets, and fishermen.

It cannot, I think, be expected, that landscapes like this should have any effect on the human heart, except to harden or to degrade it; to lead it from the love of what is simple, earnest and pure, to what is as sophisticated and corrupt in arrangement as erring and imperfect in detail. So long as such works are held up for imitation, landscape painting must be a manufacture, its productions must be toys, and its patrons must be children.

My purpose then, in the present work, is to demonstrate the utter falseness both of the facts and principles; the imperfection of material, and error of arrangement, on which works such as these are based; and to insist on the necessity, as well as the dignity, of an earnest, faithful, loving, study of nature as she is, rejecting with abhorrence all that man has done to alter and modify her. And the praise which, in this first portion of the work, is given to many English artists, would be justifiable on this ground only, that although frequently with little power and desultory effort, they have yet, in an honest and good heart, received the word of God from clouds, and leaves, and waves, and kept it,* and endeavored in humility to render to the world that purity of impression which can alone render the result of art an instrument of good, or its labor deserving of gratitude.

---

* The feelings of Constable with respect to his art might be almost a model for the young student, were it not that they err a little on the other side, and are perhaps in need of chastening and guiding from the works of his fellow-men. We should use pictures not as authorities, but as comments on nature, just as we use divines, not as authorities, but as comments on the Bible. Constable, in his dread of saint-worship, excommunicates himself from all benefit of the Church, and deprives himself of much instruction from the Scripture to which he holds, because he will not accept aid in the reading of it from the learning of other men. Sir George Beaumont, on the contrary, furnishes, in the anecdotes given of him in Constable's life, a melancholy instance of the degradation into which the human mind may fall, when it suffers human works to interfere between it and its Master. The recommending the color of an old Cremona fiddle for the prevailing tone of everything, and the vapid inquiry of the conventionalist, "Where do you put your brown tree?" show a prostration of intellect so laughable and lamentable that they are at once, on all, and to all, students of the gallery, a satire and a warning. Art so followed is the most servile indolence in which life can be wasted. There are then two dangerous extremes to be shunned,—forgetfulness of the Scripture, and scorn of the divine—slavery on the one hand, free-thinking on the other. The mean is nearly as difficult to determine or keep in art as in religion, but the great danger is on the side of superstition. He who walks humbly with Nature will seldom be in danger of losing sight of Art. He will commonly find in all that is truly great of man's works, something of their original, for which he will regard them with gratitude, and sometimes follow them with respect; while he who takes Art for his authority may entirely lose sight of all that it interprets, and sink at once into the sin of an idolater, and the degradation of a slave.

If, however, I shall have frequent occasion to insist on the necessity of this heartfelt love of, and unqualified submission to, the teaching of nature, it will be no less incumbent upon me to reprobate the careless rendering of casual impression, and the mechanical copyism of unimportant subject, which are too frequently visible in our modern school.* Their lightness and desultoriness of intention, their meaningless multiplication of unstudied composition, and their want of definiteness and loftiness of aim, bring discredit on their whole system of study, and encourage in the critic the unhappy prejudice that the field and the hill-side are less fit places of study than the gallery and the garret. Not every casual idea caught from the flight of a shower or the fall of a sunbeam, not every glowing fragment of harvest light, nor every flickering dream of copsewood coolness, is to be given to the world as it came, unconsidered, incomplete, and forgotten by the artist as soon as it has left his easel. That only should be considered a picture, in which the spirit, (not the materials, observe,) but the animating emotion of many such studies is concentrated, and exhibited by the aid of long-studied, painfully-chosen forms; idealized in the right sense of the word, not by audacious liberty of that faculty of degrading God's works which man calls his "imagination," but by perfect assertion of entire knowledge of every part and character and function of the object, and in which the details are completed to the last line compatible with the dignity and simplicity of the whole, wrought out with that noblest industry which concentrates profusion into point, and transforms accumulation into structure; neither must this labor be bestowed on every subject which appears to afford a capability of good, but on chosen subjects in which nature has prepared to the artist's hand the purest sources of the impression he would convey. These may be humble in their order, but they must be perfect of their kind. There is a perfection of the hedgerow and cottage, as well as of the forest and the palace, and more ideality in a great artist's selection and treatment of roadside weeds and brook-worn pebbles, than in all the struggling caricature of the meaner mind which heaps its foreground with colossal columns, and heaves impossible mountains into the encumbered sky. Finally, these chosen subjects must not be in any way repetitions of one another, but each founded on a new idea, and developing a totally distinct train of thought; so that the work of the artist's life should form a consistent series of essays, rising through the scale of creation from the humblest scenery to the most exalted; each picture being a necessary link in the chain, based on what preceded, introducing to what is to follow, and all, in their lovely system, exhibiting and drawing closer the bonds of nature to the human heart.

---

* I should have insisted more on this fault (for it is a fatal one) in the following Essay, but the cause of it rests rather with the public than with the artist, and in the necessities of the public as much as in their will. Such pictures as artists themselves would wish to paint, could not be executed under very high prices; and it must always be easier, in the present state of society, to find ten purchasers of ten-guinea sketches, than one purchaser for a hundred-guinea picture. Still, I have been often both surprised and grieved to see that any effort on the part of our artists to rise above manufacture—any struggle to something like completed conception—was left by the public to be its own reward. In the water-color exhibition of last year there was a noble work of David Cox's, ideal in the right sense—a forest hollow with a few sheep crushing down through its deep fern, and a solemn opening of evening sky above its dark masses of distance. It was worth all his little bits on the walls put together. Yet the public picked up all the little bits—blots and splashes, ducks, chickweed, ears of corn—all that was clever and petite; and the real picture—the full development of the artist's mind—was left on his hands. How can I, or any one else, with a conscience, advise him after this to aim at anything more than may be struck out by the cleverness of a quarter of an hour. Cattermole, I believe, is earthed and shackled in the same manner. He began his career with finished and studied pictures, which, I believe, never paid him—he now prostitutes his fine talent to the superficialness of public taste, and blots his way to emolument and oblivion. There is commonly, however, fault on both sides; in the artist for exhibiting his dexterity by mountebank tricks of the brush, until chaste finish, requiring ten times the knowledge and labor, appears insipid to the diseased taste which he has himself formed in his patrons, as the roaring and ranting of a common actor will oftentimes render apparently vapid the finished touches of perfect nature; and in the public, for taking less real pains to become acquainted with, and discriminate, the various powers of a great artist, than they would to estimate the excellence of a cook or develop the dexterity of a dancer.

Since, then, I shall have to reprobate the absence of study in the moderns nearly as much as its false direction in the ancients, my task will naturally divide itself into three portions. In the first, I shall endeavor to investigate and arrange the facts of nature with scientific accuracy ; showing as I proceed, by what total neglect of the very first base and groundwork of their art the idealities of some among the old masters are produced. This foundation once securely laid, I shall proceed, in the second portion of the work, to analyze and demonstrate the nature of the emotions of the Beautiful and Sublime; to examine the particular characters of every kind of scenery, and to bring to light, as far as may be in my power, that faultless, ceaseless, inconceivable, inexhaustible loveliness, which God has stamped upon all things, if man will only receive them as He gives them. Finally, I shall endeavor to trace the operation of all this on the hearts and minds of men; to exhibit the moral function and end of art, to prove the share which it ought to have in the thoughts, and influence on the lives of all of us; to attach to the artist the responsibility of a preacher, and to kindle in the general mind that regard which such an office must demand.

It must be evident that the first portion of this task, which is all that I have yet been enabled to offer to the reader, cannot but be the least interesting and the most laborious, especially because it is necessary that it should be executed without reference to any principles of beauty or influences of emotion. It is the hard, straightforward classification of material things, not the study of thought or passion; and therefore let me not be accused of the feelings which I choose to repress. The consideration of the high qualities of art must not be interrupted by the work of the hammer and the eudiometer.

Again, I would request that the frequent passages of reference to the great masters of the Italian school may not be looked upon as mere modes of conventional expression. I think there is enough in the following pages to prove that I am not likely to be carried away by the celebrity of a name; and therefore that the devoted love which I profess for the works of the great historical and sacred painters is sincere and well-grounded. And indeed every principle of art which I may advocate, I shall be able to illustrate by reference to the works of men universally allowed to be the masters of masters; and the public, so long as my teaching leads them to higher understanding and love of the works of Buonaroti, Leonardo, Raffaelle, Titian, and Cagliari, may surely concede to me without fear, the right of striking such blows as I may deem necessary to the establishment of my principles, at Gasper Poussin, or Vandevelde.

Indeed, I believe there is nearly as much occasion, at the present day, for advocacy of Michael Angelo against the pettiness of the moderns, as there is for support of Turner against the conventionalities of the ancients. For, though the names of the fathers of sacred art are on all our lips, our faith in them is much like that of the great world in its religion—nominal, but dead. In vain our lecturers sound the name of Raffaelle in the ears of their pupils, while their own works are visibly at variance with every principle deducible from his. In vain is the young student compelled to produce a certain number of school copies of Michael Angelo, when his bread must depend on the number of gewgaws he can crowd into his canvas. And I could with as much zeal exert myself against the modern system of English historical art, as I have in favor of our school of landscape, but that it is an ungrateful and painful task to attack the works of living painters, struggling with adverse circumstances of every kind, and especially with the false taste of a nation which regards matters of art either with the ticklishness of an infant, or the stolidity of a Megatherium.

I have been accused, in the execution of this first portion of my work, of irreverent and scurrile expression towards the works which I have depreciated. Possibly I may have been in some degree infected by reading those criticisms of our periodicals, which consist of nothing else; but I believe in general that my words will be found to have sufficient truth in them to excuse their familiarity; and that no other weapons could have been used to pierce the superstitious prejudice with which the works of certain painters are shielded from the attacks of reason. My answer is that given long ago to a similar complaint, uttered under the same circumstances by the foiled sophist:—(“Ως δ' ἔστιν ὃ ἄνθρωπος; ὡς ἀπαίδευτός τις, ος ουιω φαῦλα ὀνόματα ὀνομάζειν τολμᾷ ἐν σεμνῷ πράγματι.) Τοιοῦτός τις, ὦ Ιππία, ὀυδὲν ἄλλο φροντίζων ἢ τὸ αληθές.”

It is with more surprise that I have heard myself accused of thoughtless severity with respect to the works of contemporary painters, for I fully believe that whenever I attack them, I give myself far more pain than I can possibly inflict; and, in many instances, I have withheld reprobation which I considered necessary to the full understanding of my work, in the fear of grieving or injuring men of whose feelings and circumstances I was ignorant. Indeed, the apparently false and exaggerated bias of the whole book in favor of modern art, is in great degree dependent on my withholding the animadversions which would have given it balance, and keeping silence where I cannot praise. But I had rather be a year or two longer in effecting my purposes, than reach them by trampling on men's hearts and hearths; and I have permitted myself to express unfavorable opinions only where the popularity and favor of the artist are so great as to render the opinion of an individual a matter of indifference to him.

And now—but one word more. For many a year we have heard nothing with respect to the works of Turner but accusations of their want of *truth.* To every observation on their power, sublimity, or beauty, there has been but one reply: They are not like nature. I therefore took my opponents on their own ground, and demonstrated, by thorough investigation of actual facts, that Turner *is* like nature, and paints more of nature than any man who ever lived. I expected this proposition (the foundation of all my future efforts) would have been disputed with desperate struggles, and that I should have had to fight my way to my position inch by inch. Not at all. My opponents yield me the field at once. One (the writer for the Athenæum) has no other resource than the assertion, that "he disapproves the natural style in painting. If people want to see *nature*, let them go and look at herself. Why should they see her at second-hand on a piece of canvas?" The other, (Blackwood,) still more utterly discomfited, is reduced to a still more remarkable line of defence. "It is not," he says, "what things in all respects really are, but how they are convertible by the mind into what they are *not*, that we have to consider." (October, 1843, p. 485.) I leave therefore the reader to choose whether, with Blackwood and his fellows, he will proceed to consider how things are convertible by the mind into what they are *not*, or whether, with me, he will undergo the harder, but perhaps on the whole more useful, labor of ascertaining—What they are.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

It is with much regret, and partly against my own judgment, that I republish the following chapters in their present form. The particular circumstances (stated in the first preface) under which they were originally written, have rendered them so unfit for the position they now hold as introductory to a serious examination of the general functions of art, that I should have wished first to complete the succeeding portions of the essay, and then to write another introduction of more fitting character. But as it may be long before I am able to do this, and as I believe what I have already written may still be of some limited and partial service, I have suffered it to reappear, trusting to the kindness of the reader to look to its intention rather than its temper, and forgive its inconsideration in its earnestness.

Thinking it of too little substance to bear mending, wherever I have found a passage which I thought required modification or explanation, I have cut it out; what I have left, however imperfect, cannot I think be dangerously misunderstood: something I have added, not under the idea of rendering the work in any wise systematic or complete, but to supply gross omissions, answer inevitable objections, and give some substance to passages of mere declamation.

Whatever inadequacy or error there may be, throughout, in materials or modes of demonstration, I have no doubt of the truth and necessity of the main result; and though the reader may, perhaps, find me frequently hereafter showing other and better grounds for what is here affirmed, yet the point and bearing of the book, its determined depreciation of Claude, Salvator, Gaspar, and Canaletto, and its equally determined support of Turner as the greatest of all landscape painters, and of Turner's recent works as his finest, are good and right; and if the prevalence throughout of attack and eulogium be found irksome or offensive, let it be remembered that my object thus far has not been either the establishment or the teaching of any principles of art, but the vindication, most necessary to the prosperity of our present schools, of the uncomprehended rank of their greatest artist, and the diminution, equally necessary as I think to the prosperity of our schools, of the unadvised admiration of the landscape of the seventeenth century. For I believe it to be almost impossible to state in terms sufficiently serious and severe the depth and extent of the evil which has resulted (and that not in art alone, but in all other matters with which the contemplative faculties are concerned) from the works of those elder men. On the continent all landscape art has been utterly annihilated by them, and with it all sense of the power of nature. We in England have only done better because our artists have had strength of mind enough to form a school withdrawn from their influence.

These points are somewhat farther developed in the general sketch of ancient and modern landscape, which I have added to the first section of the second part. Some important additions have also been made to the chapters on the painting of sea. Throughout the rest of the text, though something is withdrawn, little is changed; and the reader may rest assured that if I were now to bestow on this feeble essay the careful revision which it much needs, but little deserves, it would not be to alter its tendencies, or modify its conclusions, but to prevent indignation from appearing virulence on the one side, and enthusiasm partisanship on the other.

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION (1873).

I HAVE been lately so often asked by friends on whose judgment I can rely, to permit the publication of another edition of "Modern Painters" in its original form, that I have at last yielded, though with some violence to my own feelings; for many parts of the first and second volumes are written in a narrow enthusiasm, and the substance of their metaphysical and religious speculation is only justifiable on the ground of its absolute honesty. Of the third, fourth, and fifth volumes I indeed mean eventually to rearrange what I think of permanent interest, for the complete edition of my works, but with fewer and less elaborate illustrations: nor have I any serious grounds for refusing to allow the book once more to appear in the irregular form which it took as it was written, since of the art-teaching and landscape description it contains I have little to retrench, and nothing to retract.

This final edition must, however, be limited to a thousand copies, for some of the more delicate plates are already worn, that of the Mill Stream in the fifth volume, and of the Loire Side very injuriously; while that of the Shores of Wharfe had to be retouched by an engraver after the removal of the mezzotint for reprinting. But Mr. Armytage's, Mr. Cousen's, and Mr. Cuff's magnificent plates are still in good state, and my own etchings, though injured, are still good enough to answer their purpose.

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS.

PART I.

OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

SECTION I.

OF THE NATURE OF THE IDEAS CONVEYABLE BY ART.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

PAGE
§ 1. Public opinion no criterion of excellence, except after long periods of time........ 67
§ 2. And therefore obstinate when once formed........ 70
§ 3. The author's reasons for opposing it in particular instances 71
§ 4. But only on points capable of demonstration........ 72
§ 5. The author's partiality to modern works excusable...... 73

CHAPTER II.—DEFINITION OF GREATNESS IN ART.

§ 1. Distinction between the painter's intellectual power and technical knowledge........ 74
§ 2. Painting, as such, is nothing more than language........ 74
§ 3. "Painter," a term corresponding to "versifier"........ 75
§ 4. Example in a painting of E. Landseer's........ 75
§ 5. Difficulty of fixing an exact limit between language and thought........ 76
§ 6. Distinction between decorative and expressive language. 76
§ 7. Instance in the Dutch and early Italian schools........ 77
§ 8. Yet there are certain ideas belonging to language itself.. 78
§ 9. The definition........ 78

CHAPTER III.—OF IDEAS OF POWER.

PAGE
§ 1. What classes of ideas are conveyable by art............. 79
§ 2. Ideas of power vary much in relative dignity............ 79
§ 3. But are received from whatever has been the subject of power. The meaning of the word "excellence"..... 80
§ 4. What is necessary to the distinguishing of excellence.... 82
§ 5. The pleasure attendant on conquering difficulties is right 82

CHAPTER IV.—OF IDEAS OF IMITATION.

§ 1. False use of the term "imitation" by many writers of art 83
§ 2. Real meaning of the term.............................. 84
§ 3. What is requisite to the sense of imitation............... 85
§ 4. The pleasure resulting from imitation the most contemptible that can be derived from art.................... 86
§ 5. Imitation is only of contemptible subjects............. 86
§ 6. Imitation is contemptible because it is easy............. 86
§ 7. Recapitulation 87

CHAPTER V.—OF IDEAS OF TRUTH.

§ 1. Meaning of the word "truth" as applied to art.......... 87
§ 2. First difference between truth and imitation............ 88
§ 3. Second difference.................................. 88
§ 4. Third difference.................................... 88
§ 5. No accurate truths necessary to imitation............... 89
§ 6. Ideas of truth are inconsistent with ideas of imitation.... 91

CHAPTER VI.—OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

§ 1. Definition of the term "beautiful"................... 92
§ 2. Definition of the term "taste"........................ 92
§ 3. Distinction between taste and judgment 93
§ 4. How far beauty may become intellectual............... 93
§ 5. The high rank and function of ideas of beauty.......... 94
§ 6. Meaning of the term "ideal beauty"................... 94

CHAPTER VII.—OF IDEAS OF RELATION.

§ 1. General meaning of the term 94
§ 2. What ideas are to be comprehended under it............ 95
§ 3. The exceeding nobility of these ideas 96
§ 4. Why no subdivision of so extensive a class is necessary... 96

SECTION II.

OF POWER.

CHAPTER I. — GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF POWER.

PAGE
§ 1. No necessity for detailed study of ideas of imitation.... 98
§ 2. Nor for separate study of ideas of power.............. 98
§ 3. Except under one particular form...................... 99
§ 4. There are two modes of receiving ideas of power, commonly inconsistent.................................. 99
§ 5. First reason of the inconsistency..................... 99
§ 6. Second reason for the inconsistency................... 100
§ 7. The sensation of power ought not to be sought in imperfect art.. 100
§ 8. Instances in pictures of modern artists................ 101
§ 9. Connection between ideas of power and modes of execution.. 101

CHAPTER II.—OF IDEAS OF POWER, AS THEY ARE DEPENDENT UPON EXECUTION.

§ 1. Meaning of the term "execution"...................... 102
§ 2. The first quality of execution is truth 102
§ 3. The second, simplicity................................ 103
§ 4. The third, mystery.................................... 103
§ 5. The fourth, inadequacy; and the fifth, decision 103
§ 6. The sixth, velocity................................... 103
§ 7. Strangeness an illegitimate source of pleasure in execution 103
§ 8. Yet even the legitimate sources of pleasure in execution are inconsistent with each other.................... 105
§ 9. And fondness for ideas of power leads to the adoption of the lowest... 105
§ 10. Therefore perilous................................... 106
§ 11. Recapitulation....................................... 106

CHAPTER III.—OF THE SUBLIME.

§ 1. Sublimity is the effect upon the mind of anything above it 107
§ 2. Burke's theory of the nature of the sublime incorrect, and why... 107
§ 3. Danger is sublime, but not the fear of it............. 108
§ 4. The highest beauty is sublime......................... 108
§ 5. And generally whatever elevates the mind.............. 108
§ 6. The former division of the subject is therefore sufficient 109

PART II.

OF TRUTH.

SECTION I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.—OF IDEAS OF TRUTH IN THEIR CONNECTION WITH THOSE OF BEAUTY AND RELATION.

PAGE
§ 1. The two great ends of landscape painting are the representation of facts and thoughts.................... 110
§ 2. They induce a different choice of material subjects 111
§ 3. The first mode of selection apt to produce sameness and repetition...................................... 111
§ 4. The second necessitating variety....................... 112
§ 5. Yet the first is delightful to all........................ 112
§ 6. The second only to a few............................ 112
§ 7. The first necessary to the second..................... 113
§ 8. The exceeding importance of truth.................... 114
§ 9. Coldness or want of beauty no sign of truth............ 114
§ 10. How truth may be considered a just criterion of all art. 114

CHAPTER II.—THAT THE TRUTH OF NATURE IS NOT TO BE DISCERNED BY THE UNEDUCATED SENSES.

§ 1. The common self-deception of men with respect to their power of discerning truth 116
§ 2. Men usually see little of what is before their eyes....... 116
§ 3. But more or less in proportion to their natural sensibility to what is beautiful.............................. 118
§ 4. Connected with a perfect state of moral feeling 118
§ 5. And of the intellectual powers 119
§ 6. How sight depends upon previous knowledge........... 120
§ 7. The difficulty increased by the variety of truths in nature 121
§ 8. We recognize objects by their least important attributes. Compare Part I., Sect. I., Chap. 4................. 122

CHAPTER III.—OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:—FIRST, THAT PARTICULAR TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN GENERAL ONES.

§ 1. Necessity of determining the relative importance of truths.................................... 124

PAGE
§ 2. Misapplication of the aphorism: "General truths are more important than particular ones" 124
§ 3. Falseness of this maxim taken without explanation..... 125
§ 4. Generality important in the subject, particularity in the predicate 125
§ 5. The importance of truths of species is not owing to their generality.. 126
§ 6. All truths valuable as they are characteristic 127
§ 7. Otherwise truths of species are valuable, because beautiful 127
§ 8. And many truths, valuable if separate, may be objectionable in connection with others 128
§ 9. Recapitulation 129

CHAPTER IV.—OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:— SECONDLY, THAT RARE TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FREQUENT ONES.

§ 1. No accidental violation of nature's principles should be represented 129
§ 2. But the cases in which those principles have been strikingly exemplified.................................. 130
§ 3. Which are comparatively rare.......................... 130
§ 4. All repetition is blamable............................. 131
§ 5. The duty of the painter is the same as that of a preacher 131

CHAPTER V.—OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:— THIRDLY, THAT TRUTHS OF COLOR ARE THE LEAST IMPORTANT OF ALL TRUTHS.

§ 1. Difference between primary and secondary qualities in bodies.. 132
§ 2. The first are fully characteristic, the second imperfectly so.. 132
§ 3. Color is a secondary quality, therefore less important than form.. 133
§ 4. Color no distinction between objects of the same species 134
§ 5. And different in association from what it is alone........ 134
§ 6. It is not certain whether any two people see the same colors in things.................................. 134
§ 7. Form, considered as an element of landscape, includes light and shade................................... 135
§ 8. Importance of light and shade in expressing the character of bodies, and unimportance of color................ 135
§ 9. Recapitulation.. 136

PAGE
§ 7. The principle of Turner in this respect................ 213
§ 8. Comparison of N. Poussin's "Phocion"................ 214
§ 9. With Turner's "Mercury and Argus"................. 215
§ 10. And with the "Datur Hora Quieti".................. 216
§ 11. The second sense of the word "tone"................ 216
§ 12. Remarkable difference in this respect between the paintings and drawings of Turner 216
§ 13. Not owing to want of power over the material 217
§ 14. The two distinct qualities of light to be considered 218
§ 15. Falsehoods by which Titian attains the appearance of quality in light 218
§ 16. Turner will not use such means 219
§ 17. But gains in essential truth by the sacrifice............ 219
§ 18. The second quality of light 220
§ 19. The perfection of Cuyp in this respect interfered with by numerous solecisms 221
§ 20. Turner is not so perfect in parts—far more so in the whole. 222
§ 21. The power in Turner of uniting a number of tones..... 223
§ 22. Recapitulation 224

CHAPTER II.—OF TRUTH OF COLOR.

§ 1. Observations on the color of G. Poussin's La Riccia..... 225
§ 2. As compared with the actual scene................... 225
§ 3. Turner himself is inferior in brilliancy to nature 227
§ 4. Impossible colors of Salvator, Titian.................. 227
§ 5. Poussin, and Claude 229
§ 6. Turner's translation of colors......................... 231
§ 7. Notice of effects in which no brilliancy of art can even approach that of reality 231
§ 8. Reasons for the usual incredulity of the observer with respect to their representation...................... 232
§ 9. Color of the Napoleon 234
§ 10. Necessary discrepancy between the attainable brilliancy of color and light 234
§ 11. This discrepancy less in Turner than in other colorists.. 235
§ 12. Its great extent in a landscape attributed to Rubens... 236
§ 13. Turner scarcely ever uses pure or vivid color 236
§ 14. The basis of gray, under all his vivid hues............ 238
§ 15. The variety and fulness even of his most simple tones. 239
§ 16. Following the infinite and unapproachable variety of nature.................................. 239
§ 17. His dislike of purple, and fondness for the opposition of yellow and black. The principles of nature in this respect 240

PAGE

§ 10. Total absence

PAGE

§ 18. His early works are false in color.................. 242
§ 19. His drawings invariably perfect.................. 242
§ 20. The subjection of his system of color to that of chiaroscuro.................. 284

·e and

CHAPTER III.—OF TRUTH OF CHIAROSCURO.

§ 1. We are not at present to examine particular effects of light.................. 284
§ 2. And therefore the distinctness of shadows is the means of expressing vividness of light.................. 285
§ 3. Total absence of such distinctness in the works of the Italian school.................. 286
§ 4. And partial absence in the Dutch.................. 286
§ 5. The perfection of Turner's works in this respect.................. 250
§ 6. The effect of his shadows upon the light..................
§ 7. The distinction holds good between almost all the works of the ancient and modern schools.................. 250
§ 8. Second great principle of chiaroscuro. Both high light and deep shadow are used in equal quantity, and only in points.................. 252
§ 9. Neglect or contradiction of this principle by writers on art.................. 252
§ 10. And consequent misguiding of the student.................. 253
§ 11. The great value of a simple chiaroscuro.................. 254
§ 12. The sharp separation of nature's lights from her middle tint.................. 254
§ 13. The truth of Turner.................. 255

CHAPTER IV.—OF TRUTH OF SPACE:—FIRST, AS DEPENDENT ON THE FOCUS OF THE EYE.

§ 1. Space is more clearly indicated by the drawing of objects than by their hue..................
§ 2. It is impossible to see objects at unequal distances distinctly at one moment..................
§ 3. Especially such as are both comparatively near..................
§ 4. In painting, therefore, either the foreground or distance must be partially sacrificed.................. 259
§ 5. Which not being done by the old masters, they could not express space.................. 259
§ 6. But modern artists have succeeded in fully carrying out this principle.................. 260
§ 7. Especially of Turner.................. 261
§ 8. Justification of the want of drawing in Turner's figures 26

SYNOPSIS OF CC

PAGE

CHAPTER V.—OF TRUTH OF SPACE:—SECONDLY, AS ITS APPEARANCE IS DEPENDENT ON THE POWER OF THE EYE.

§ 1. The peculiar indistinctness dependent on the retirement of objects from the eye........................ 263
§ 2. Causes confusion, but not annihilation of details...... 263
§ 3. Instances in various objects......................... 264
§ 4. Two great resultant truths; that nature is never distinct, and never vacant............................. 265
§ 5. Complete violation of both these principles by the old masters. They are either distinct or vacant........ 266
§ 6. Instances from Nicholas Poussin..................... 266
§ 7. From Claude... 266
§ 8. And G. Poussin...................................... 268
§ 9. The imperative necessity, in landscape painting, of fulness and finish...................................... 268
§ 10. Breadth is not vacancy.............................. 269
§ 11. The fulness and mystery of Turner's distances........ 271
§ 12. Farther illustrations in architectural drawing.......... 271
§ 13. In near objects as well as distances.................. 272
§ 14. Vacancy and falsehood of Canaletto................. 272
§ 15. Still greater fulness and finish in landscape foregrounds 273
§ 16. Space and size are destroyed alike by distinctness and by vacancy.. 275
§ 17. Swift execution best secures perfection of details...... 275
§ 18. Finish is far more necessary in landscape than in historical subjects.. 275
§ 19. Recapitulation of the section........................ 276

SECTION III.

OF TRUTH OF SKIES.

CHAPTER I.—OF THE OPEN SKY.

§ 1. The peculiar adaptation of the sky to the pleasing and teaching of man....................................... 277
§ 2. The carelessness with which its lessons are received.... 278
§ 3. The most essential of these lessons are the gentlest.... 278
§ 4. Many of our ideas of sky altogether conventional...... 279
§ 5. Nature and essential qualities of the open blue........ 279
§ 6. Its connection with clouds.......................... 28
§ 7. Its exceeding depth................................ 2
§ 8. These qualities are especially given by modern masters 281
§ 9. And by Claude...................................... 281

PAGE

§ 10. Total absence of them in Poussin. Physical errors in his general treatment of open sky 282
§ 11. Errors of Cuyp in graduation of color 282
§ 12. The exceeding value of the skies of the early Italian and Dutch schools. Their qualities are unattainable in modern times 284
§ 13. Phenomena of visible sunbeams. Their nature and cause 284
§ 14. They are only illuminated mist, and cannot appear when the sky is free from vapor, nor when it is without clouds 285
§ 15. Erroneous tendency in the representation of such phenomena by the old masters 286
§ 16. The ray which appears in the dazzled eye should not be represented 286
§ 17. The practice of Turner. His keen perception of the more delicate phenomena of rays 287
§ 18. The total absence of any evidence of such perception in the works of the old masters 287
§ 19. Truth of the skies of modern drawings 288
§ 20. Recapitulation. The best skies of the ancients are, in *quality*, inimitable, but in rendering of various truth, childish 288

CHAPTER II.—OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS:—FIRST, OF THE REGION OF THE CIRRUS.

§ 1. Difficulty of ascertaining wherein the truth of clouds consists 289
§ 2. Variation of their character at different elevations. The three regions to which they may conveniently be considered as belonging 290
§ 3. Extent of the upper region 290
§ 4. The symmetrical arrangement of its clouds 290
§ 5. Their exceeding delicacy 291
§ 6. Their number 292
§ 7. Causes of their peculiarly delicate coloring 292
§ 8. Their variety of form 293
§ 9. Total absence of even the slightest effort at their representation, in ancient landscape 293
§ 10. The intense and constant study of them by Turner 294
§ 11. His vignette, Sunrise on the Sea 296
§ 12. His use of the cirrus in expressing mist 297
§ 13. His consistency in every minor feature 297

PAGE
§ 14. The color of the upper clouds........................ 298
§ 15. Recapitulation.................................. 299

CHAPTER III.—OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS:—SECONDLY, OF THE CENTRAL CLOUD REGION.

§ 1. Extent and typical character of the central cloud region. 300
§ 2. Its characteristic clouds, requiring no attention nor thought for their representation, are therefore favorite subjects with the old masters..... 300
§ 3. The clouds of Salvator and Poussin..... 301
§ 4. Their essential characters 301
§ 5. Their angular forms and general decision of outline.... 303
§ 6. The composition of their minor curves................ 303
§ 7. Their characters, as given by S. Rosa................. 304
§ 8. Monotony and falsehood of the clouds of the Italian school generally...... 304
§ 9. Vast size of congregated masses of cloud............. 305
§ 10. Demonstrable by comparison with mountain ranges.... 306
§ 11. And consequent divisions and varieties of feature....... 306
§ 12. Not lightly to be omitted........................... 307
§ 13. Imperfect conceptions of this size and extent in ancient landscape.................................... 308
§ 14. Total want of transparency and evanescence in the clouds of ancient landscape..... 308
§ 15. Farther proof of their deficiency in space.............. 309
§ 16. Instance of perfect truth in the sky of Turner's Babylon 310
§ 17. And in his Pools of Solomon......................... 311
§ 18. Truths of outline and character in his Como........... 312
§ 19. Association of the cirrostratus with the cumulus....... 312
§ 20. The deep-based knowledge of the Alps in Turner's Lake of Geneva.................................... 313
§ 21. Further principles of cloud form exemplified in his Amalfi....................................... 313
§ 22. Reasons for insisting on the *infinity* of Turner's works. Infinity is almost an unerring test of *all* truth....... 314
§ 23. Instances of the total want of it in the works of Salvator 315
§ 24. And of the universal presence of it in those of Turner. The conclusions which may be arrived at from it.... 315
§ 25. The multiplication of objects, or increase of their size, will not give the impression of infinity, but is the resource of novices............................... 316
§ 26. Farther instances of infinity in the gray skies of Turner 317
§ 27. The excellence of the cloud-drawing of Stanfield...... 317
§ 28. The average standing of the English school........... 318

PAGE

CHAPTER IV.—OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS:—THIRDLY, OF THE REGION OF THE RAIN-CLOUD.

§ 1. The apparent difference in character between the lower and central clouds is dependent chiefly on proximity 319
§ 2. Their marked difference in color.................... 319
§ 3. And in definiteness of form.......................... 320
§ 4. They are subject to precisely the same great laws...... 321
§ 5. Value, to the painter, of the rain-cloud............... 321
§ 6. The old masters have not left a single instance of the painting of the rain-cloud, and very few efforts at it. Gaspar Poussin's storms.......................... 322
§ 7. The great power of the moderns in this respect........ 323
§ 8. Works of Copley Fielding.............................. 323
§ 9. His peculiar truth..................................... 324
§ 10. His weakness and its probable cause.................. 324
§ 11. Impossibility of reasoning on the rain clouds of Turner from engravings.............................. 325
§ 12. His rendering of Fielding's particular moment in the Jumieges.. 326
§ 13. Illustration of the nature of clouds in the opposed forms of smoke and steam.......................... 326
§ 14. Moment of retiring rain in the Llanthony 327
§ 15. And of commencing, chosen with peculiar meaning for Loch Coriskin...................................... 327
§ 16. The drawing of transparent vapor in the Land's End... 328
§ 17. The individual character of its parts................ 329
§ 18. Deep studied form of swift rain-cloud in the Coventry.. 330
§ 19. Compared with forms given by Salvator............... 330
§ 20. Entire expression of tempest by minute touches and circumstances in the Coventry......................... 331
§ 21. Especially by contrast with a passage of extreme repose 331
§ 22. The truth of this particular passage. Perfectly pure blue sky only seen after rain, and how seen......... 332
§ 23. Absence of this effect in the works of the old masters.. 332
§ 24. Success of our water-color artists in its rendering. Use of it by Turner................................ 333
§ 25. Expression of near rain-cloud in the Gosport, and other works... 333
§ 26. Contrasted with Gaspar Poussin's rain-cloud in the Dido and Æneas 334
§ 27. Turner's power of rendering mist..................... 334
§ 28. His effects of mist so perfect, that if not at once understood, they can no more be explained or reasoned on than nature herself............................ 335

PAGE
§ 29. Various instances ... 335
§ 30. Turner's more violent effects of tempest are never rendered by engravers ... 336
§ 31. General system of landscape engraving ... 336
§ 32. The storm in the Stonehenge ... 337
§ 33. General character of such effects as given by Turner. His expression of falling rain ... 337
§ 34. Recapitulation of the section ... 338
§ 35. Sketch of a few of the skies of nature, taken as a whole, compared with the works of Turner and of the old masters. Morning on the plains ... 338
§ 36. Noon with gathering storms ... 339
§ 37. Sunset in tempest. Serene midnight ... 340
§ 38. And sunrise on the Alps ... 341

CHAPTER V.—EFFECTS OF LIGHT RENDERED BY MODERN ART.

§ 1. Reasons for merely, at present, naming, without examining the particular effects of light rendered by Turner ... 342
§ 2. Hopes of the author for assistance in the future investigation of them ... 342

MODERN PAINTERS.

PART I.

OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

SECTION I.

OF THE NATURE OF THE IDEAS CONVEYABLE BY ART.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

§ 1. Public opinion no criterion of excellence, except after long periods of time.

If it be true, and it can scarcely be disputed, that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that while the fancies and feelings which deny deserved honor and award what is undue have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind, descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump, and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this gradual victory of what is consistent over what is vacillating, depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature. For it is an insult to what is really great in either, to suppose that it in any way addresses itself to mean or uncultivated faculties. It is a matter of the simplest demonstration, that no man can be really appreciated but by his equal or superior. His inferior may over-estimate him in enthusiasm ; or, as is more commonly the case, degrade him, in ignorance ; but he cannot form a grounded and just estimate. Without proving this, however—which it would take more space to do than I can spare—it is sufficiently evident that there is no process of amalgamation by which opinions, wrong individually, can become right merely by their multitude.*

If I stand by a picture in the Academy, and hear twenty persons in succession admiring some paltry piece of mechanism or imitation in the lining of a cloak, or the satin of a slipper, it is absurd to tell me that they reprobate collectively what they admire individually : or, if they pass with apathy by a piece of the most noble conception or most perfect truth, because it has in it no tricks of the brush nor grimace of expression, it is absurd to tell me that they collectively respect what they separately scorn, or that the feelings and knowledge of such judges, by any length of time or comparison of ideas, could come to any right conclusion with respect to what is really high in art. The question is not decided by them, but for them ;—decided at first by few : by fewer in proportion as the merits of the work are of a higher order. From these few the decision is communicated to the number next below them in rank of mind, and by these again to a wider and lower circle; each rank being so far cognizant of the superiority of that above it, as to receive its decision with respect; until, in process of time, the right and consistent opinion is communicated to all, and held by all as a matter of faith, the more positively in proportion as the grounds of it are less perceived.*

---

* The opinion of a majority is right only when it is more probable with each individual that he should be right than that he should be wrong, as in the case of a jury. Where it is more probable, with respect to each individual, that he should be wrong than right, the opinion of the minority is the true one. Thus it is in art.

---

* There are, however, a thousand modifying circumstances which render this process sometimes unnecessary,—sometimes rapid and certain—sometimes impossible. It is unnecessary in rhetoric and the drama, because the multitude is the only proper judge of those arts whose end is to move the multitude (though more is necessary to a fine play than is essentially dramatic, and it is only of the dramatic part that the multitude are cognizant). It is unnecessary, when, united with the higher qualities of a work, there are appeals to universal passion, to all the faculties and feelings which are general in man as an animal. The popularity is then as sudden as it is well grounded, —it is hearty and honest in every mind, but it is based in every mind on a different species of excellence. Such will often be the case with the noblest works of literature. Take Don Quixote for example. The lowest mind would find in it perpetual and brutal amusement in the misfortunes of the knight, and perpetual pleasure in sympathy with the squire. A mind of average feeling would perceive the satirical meaning and force of the book, would appreciate its wit, its elegance, and its truth. But only elevated and peculiar minds discover, in addition to all this, the full moral bèauty of the love and truth which are the constant associates of all that is even most weak and erring in the character of its hero, and pass over the rude adventure and scurrile jest in haste—perhaps in pain, to penetrate beneath the rusty corselet, and catch from the wandering glance the evidence and expression of fortitude, self-devotion, and universal love. So, again, with the works of Scott and Byron; popularity was as instant as it was deserved, because there is in them an appeal to those passions which are universal in all men, as well as an expression of such thoughts as can be received only by the few. But they are admired by the majority of their advocates for the weakest parts of their works, as a popular preacher by the majority of his congregation for the worst part of his sermon.

The process is rapid and certain, when, though there may be little to catch the multitude at once, there is much which they can enjoy when their attention is authoritatively directed to it. So rests the reputation of Shakspeare. No ordinary mind can comprehend wherein his undisputed superiority consists, but there is yet quite as much to amuse, thrill, or excite,—quite as much of what is, in the strict sense of the word, dramatic, in his works as in any one else's. They were

But when this process has taken place, and the work has become sanctified by time in the minds of men, it is impossible that any new work of equal merit can be impartially compared with it, except by minds not only educated and generally capable of appreciating merit, but strong enough to shake off the weight of prejudice and association, which invariably incline them to the older favorite. It is much easier, says Barry, to repeat the character recorded of Phidias, than to investigate the merits of Agasias. And when, as peculiarly in the case of painting, much knowledge of what is technical and practical is necessary to a right judgment, so that those alone are competent to pronounce a true verdict who are themselves the persons to be judged, and who therefore can give no opinion, centuries may elapse before

§ 2. And therefore obstinate when once formed.

received, therefore, when first written, with average approval, as works of common merit; but when the high decision was made, and the circle spread, the public took up the hue and cry conscientiously enough. Let them have daggers, ghosts, clowns, and kings, and with such real and definite sources of enjoyment, they will take the additional trouble to learn half a dozen quotations, without understanding them, and admit the superiority of Shakspeare without further demur. Nothing, perhaps, can more completely demonstrate the total ignorance of the public of all that is great or valuable in Shakspeare than their universal admiration of Maclise's Hamlet.

The process is impossible when there is in the work nothing to attract and something to disgust the vulgar mind. Neither their intrinsic excellence, nor the authority of those who can judge of it, will ever make the poems of Wordsworth or George Herbert popular, in the sense in which Scott and Byron are popular, because it is to the vulgar a labor instead of a pleasure to read them; and there are parts in them which to such judges cannot but be vapid or ridiculous. Most works of the highest art,—those of Raffaelle, M. Angelo, or Da Vinci,—stand as Shakspeare does,—that which is commonplace and feeble in their excellence being taken for its essence by the uneducated, imagination assisting the impression, (for we readily fancy that we feel, when feeling is a matter of pride or conscience,) and affectation and pretension increasing the noise of the rapture, if not its degree. Giotto, Orgagna, Angelico, Perugino, stand, like George Herbert, only with the few. Wilkie becomes popular, like Scott, because he touches passions which all feel, and expresses truths which all can recognize.

fair comparison can be made between two artists of different ages; while the patriarchal excellence exercises during the interval a tyrannical—perhaps, even a blighting, influence over the minds, both of the public and of those to whom, properly understood, it should serve for a guide and example. In no city of Europe where art is a subject of attention, are its prospects so hopeless, or its pursuits so resultless, as in Rome; because there, among all students, the authority of their predecessors in art is supreme and without appeal, and the mindless copyist studies Raffaelle, but not what Raffaelle studied. It thus becomes the duty of every one capable of demonstrating any definite points of superiority in modern art, and who is in a position in which his doing so will not be ungraceful, to encounter without hesitation whatever opprobrium may fall upon him from the necessary prejudice even of the most candid minds, and from the far more virulent opposition of those who have no hope of maintaining their own reputation for discernment but in the support of that kind of consecrated merit which may be applauded without an inconvenient necessity for reasons. It is my purpose, therefore, believing that there are certain points of superiority in modern artists, and especially in one or two of their number, which have not yet been fully understood, except by those who are scarcely in a position admitting the declaration of their conviction, to institute a close comparison between the great works of ancient and modern landscape art, to raise, as far as possible, the deceptive veil of imaginary light through which we are accustomed to gaze upon the patriarchal work, and to show the real relations, whether favorable or otherwise, subsisting between it and our own. I am fully aware that this is not to be done lightly or rashly; that it is the part of every one proposing to undertake such a task strictly to examine, with prolonged doubt and severe trial, every opinion in any way contrary to the sacred verdict of time, and to advance nothing which does not, at least in his own conviction, rest on surer ground than mere feeling or taste. I have accord-

§ 3. The author's reasons for opposing it in particular instances.

ingly advanced nothing in the following pages but with accompanying demonstration, which may indeed be true or false—complete or conditional, but which can only be met on its own grounds, and can in no way be borne down or affected by mere authority of great names. Yet even thus I should scarcely have ventured to speak so decidedly as I have, but for my full conviction that we ought not to class the historical painters of the fifteenth, and landscape painters of the seventeenth, centuries, together, under the general title of "old masters," as if they possessed anything like corresponding rank in their respective walks of art. I feel assured that the principles on which they worked are totally opposed, and that the landscape painters have been honored only because they exhibited in mechanical and technical qualities some semblance of the manner of the nobler historical painters, whose principles of conception and composition they entirely reversed. The course of study which has led me reverently to the feet of Michael Angelo and Da Vinci, has alienated me gradually from Claude and Gaspar—I cannot at the same time do homage to power and pettiness—to the truth of consummate science, and the mannerism of undisciplined imagination. And let it be understood that whenever hereafter I speak depreciatingly of the old masters as a body, I refer to none of the historical painters, for whom I entertain a veneration, which though I hope reasonable in its grounds, is almost superstitious in degree. Neither, unless he be particularly mentioned, do I intend to include Nicholas Poussin, whose landscapes have a separate and elevated character, which renders it necessary to consider them apart from all others. Speaking generally of the older masters, I refer only to Claude, Gaspar, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Cuyp, Berghem, Both, Ruysdael, Hobbima, Teniers, (in his landscapes,) P. Potter, Canaletti, and the various Van somethings, and Back somethings, more especially and malignantly those who have libelled the sea.

§ 4. But only on points capable of demonstration.

It will of course be necessary for me, in the commencement of the work to state briefly those principles on which

I conceive all right judgment of art must be founded. These introductory chapters I should wish to be read carefully, because all criticism must be useless when the terms or grounds of it are in any degree ambiguous; and the ordinary language of connoisseurs and critics, granting that they understand it themselves, is usually mere jargon to others, from their custom of using technical terms, by which everything is meant, and nothing is expressed.

§ 5. The author's partiality to modern works excusable.

And if, in the application of these principles, in spite of my endeavor to render it impartial, the feeling and fondness which I have for some works of modern art escape me sometimes where it should not, let it be pardoned as little more than a fair counterbalance to that peculiar veneration with which the work of the older master, associated as it has ever been in our ears with the expression of whatever is great or perfect, must be usually regarded by the reader. I do not say that this veneration is wrong, nor that we should be less attentive to the repeated words of time: but let us not forget, that if honor be for the dead, gratitude can only be for the living. He who has once stood beside the grave, to look back upon the companionship which has been forever closed, feeling how impotent *there* are the wild love, or the keen sorrow, to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart, or atone in the lowest measure to the departed spirit for the hour of unkindness, will scarcely for the future incur that debt to the heart, which can only be discharged to the dust. But the lesson which men receive as individuals, they do not learn as nations. Again and again they have seen their noblest descend into the grave, and have thought it enough to garland the tombstone when they had not crowned the brow, and to pay the honor to the ashes which they had denied to the spirit. Let it not displease them that they are bidden, amidst the tumult and the dazzle of their busy life, to listen for the few voices, and watch for the few lamps, which God has toned and lighted to charm and to guide them, that they may not learn their sweetness by their silence, nor their light by their decay.

CHAPTER II.

DEFINITION OF GREATNESS IN ART.

§ 1. Distinction between the painter's intellectual power and technical knowledge.

In the 15th Lecture of Sir Joshua Reynolds, incidental notice is taken of the distinction between those excellences in the painter which belong to him *as such*, and those which belong to him in common with all men of intellect, the general and exalted powers of which art is the evidence and expression, not the subject. But the distinction is not there dwelt upon as it should be, for it is owing to the slight attention ordinarily paid to it, that criticism is open to every form of coxcombry, and liable to every phase of error. It is a distinction on which depend all sound judgment of the rank of the artist, and all just appreciation of the dignity of art.

§ 2. Painting, as such, is nothing more than language.

Painting, or art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing. He who has learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much towards being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learned how to express himself grammatically and melodiously has towards being a great poet. The language is, indeed, more difficult of acquirement in the one case than in the other, and possesses more power of delighting the sense, while it speaks to the intellect, but it is, nevertheless, nothing more than language, and all those excellences which are peculiar to the painter as such, are merely what rhythm, melody, precision and force are in the words of the orator and the poet, necessary to their greatness, but not the test of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined.

§ 3. "Painter," a term corresponding to "versifier."

Speaking with strict propriety, therefore, we should call a man a great painter only as he excelled in precision and force in the language of lines, and a great versifier, as he excelled in precision or force in the language of words. A great poet would then be a term strictly, and in precisely the same sense applicable to both, if warranted by the character of the images or thoughts which each in their respective languages convey.

§ 4. Example in a painting of E. Landseer's.

Take, for instance, one of the most perfect poems or pictures (I use the words as synonymous) which modern times have seen:—the "Old Shepherd's Chief-mourner." Here the exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright, sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear painting of the wood of the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog's breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid, close and motionless, upon its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin-lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life—how unwatched the departure of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep;—these are all thoughts—thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from hundreds of equal merit, as far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin, or the fold of a drapery, but as the Man of Mind.

It is not, however, always easy, either in painting or literature, to determine where the influence of language stops, and where that of thought begins. Many thoughts are so dependent upon the language in which they are clothed, that they would lose half their beauty if otherwise expressed. But the highest thoughts are those which are least dependent on language, and the dignity of any composition and praise to which it is entitled, are in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression. A composition is indeed usually most perfect, when to such intrinsic dignity is added all that expression can do to attract and adorn ; but in every case of supreme excellence this all becomes as nothing. We are more gratified by the simplest lines or words which can suggest the idea in its own naked beauty, than by the robe or the gem which conceal while they decorate ; we are better pleased to feel by their absence how little they could bestow, than by their presence how much they can destroy.

§ 5. Difficulty of fixing an exact limit between language and thought.

§ 6. Distinction between decorative and expressive language.

There is therefore a distinction to be made between what is ornamental in language and what is expressive. That part of it which is necessary to the embodying and conveying the thought is worthy of respect and attention as necessary to excellence, though not the test of it. But that part of it which is decorative has little more to do with the intrinsic excellence of the picture than the frame or the varnishing of it. And this caution in distinguishing between the ornamental and the expressive is peculiarly necessary in painting ; for in the language of words it is nearly impossible for that which is not expressive to be beautiful, except by mere rhythm or melody, any sacrifice to which is immediately stigmatized as error. But the beauty of mere language in painting is not only very attractive and entertaining to the spectator, but requires for its attainment no small exertion of mind and devotion of time by the artist. Hence, in art, men have frequently fancied that they were becoming rhetoricians and poets when they were only learning to speak melodiously, and the judge has over and over again advanced to the honor of authors those who were never more than ornamental writing-masters.

§ 7. Instance in the Dutch and early Italian schools.

Most pictures of the Dutch school, for instance, excepting always those of Rubens, Vandyke, and Rembrandt, are ostentatious exhibitions of the artist's power of speech, the clear and vigorous elocution of useless and senseless words : while the early efforts of Cimabue and Giotto are the burning messages of prophecy, delivered by the stammering lips of infants. It is not by ranking the former as more than mechanics, or the latter as less than artists, that the taste of the multitude, always awake to the lowest pleasures which art can bestow, and blunt to the highest, is to be formed or elevated. It must be the part of the judicious critic carefully to distinguish what is language, and what is thought, and to rank and praise pictures chiefly for the latter, considering the former as a totally inferior excellence, and one which cannot be compared with nor weighed against thought in any way nor in any degree whatsoever. The picture which has the nobler and more numerous ideas, however awkwardly expressed, is a greater and a better picture than that which has the less noble and less numerous ideas, however beautifully expressed. No weight, nor mass, nor beauty of execution can outweigh one grain or fragment of thought. Three penstrokes of Raffaelle are a greater and a better picture than the most finished work that ever Carlo Dolci polished into inanity. A finished work of a great artist is only better than its sketch, if the sources of pleasure belonging to color and realization—valuable in themselves,—are so employed as to increase the impressiveness of the thought. But if one atom of thought has vanished, all color, all finish, all execution, all ornament, are too dearly bought. Nothing but thought can pay for thought, and the instant that the increasing refinement or finish of the picture begins to be paid for by the loss of the faintest shadow of an idea, that instant all refinement or finish is an excrescence and a deformity.

Yet although in all our speculations on art, language is thus to be distinguished from, and held subordinate to, that which it conveys, we must still remember that there are certain ideas inherent in language itself, and that strictly speaking, every pleasure connected with art has in it some reference to the intellect. The mere sensual pleasure of the eye, received from the most brilliant piece of coloring, is as nothing to that which it receives from a crystal prism, except as it depends on our perception of a certain meaning and intended arrangement of color, which has been the subject of intellect. Nay, the term idea, according to Locke's definition of it, will extend even to the sensual impressions themselves as far as they are "things which the mind occupies itself about in thinking," that is, not as they are felt by the eye only, but as they are received by the mind through the eye. So that, if I say that the greatest picture is that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas, I have a definition which will include as subjects of comparison every pleasure which art is capable of conveying. If I were to say, on the contrary, that the best picture was that which most closely imitated nature, I should assume that art could only please by imitating nature, and I should cast out of the pale of criticism those parts of works of art which are not imitative, that is to say, intrinsic beauties of color and form, and those works of art wholly, which, like the arabesques of Raffaelle in the Loggias, are not imitative at all. Now I want a definition of art wide enough to include all its varieties of aim; I do not say therefore that the art is greatest which gives most pleasure, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to teach, and not to please. I do not say that the art is greatest which teaches us most, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to please, and not to teach. I do not say that the art is greatest which imitates best, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to create, and not to imitate. But I say that the art is greatest, which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas, and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully

§ 8. Yet there are certain ideas belonging to language itself.

§ 9. The definition.

occupies, and in occupying, exercises and exalts, the faculty by which it is received.

If this then be the definition of great art, that of a great artist naturally follows. He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas.

CHAPTER III.

OF IDEAS OF POWER.

The definition of art which I have just given, requires me to determine what kinds of ideas can be received from works of art, and which of these are the greatest, before proceeding to any practical application of the test.

§ 1. What classes of ideas are conveyable by art.

I think that all the sources of pleasure, or any other good, to be derived from works of art, may be referred to five distinct heads.

I. Ideas of Power.—The perception or conception of the mental or bodily powers by which the work has been produced.

II. Ideas of Imitation.—The perception that the thing produced resembles something else.

III. Ideas of Truth.—The perception of faithfulness in a statement of facts by the thing produced.

IV. Ideas of Beauty.—The perception of beauty, either in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.

V. Ideas of Relation.—The perception of intellectual relations, in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.

I shall briefly distinguish the nature and effects of each of these classes of ideas.

§ 2. Ideas of power vary much in relative dignity.

I. Ideas of Power.—These are the simple perception of the mental or bodily powers exerted in the production of any work of art.

According to the dignity and degree of the power perceived is the dignity of the idea; but the whole class of ideas is received by the intellect, and they excite the best of the moral feelings, veneration, and the desire of exertion. As a species, therefore, they are one of the noblest connected with art; but the differences in degree of dignity among themselves are infinite, being correspondent with every order of power,—from that of the fingers to that of the most exalted intellect. Thus, when we see an Indian's paddle carved from the handle to the blade, we have a conception of prolonged manual labor, and are gratified in proportion to the supposed expenditure of time and exertion. These are, indeed, powers of a low order, yet the pleasure arising from the conception of them enters very largely indeed into our admiration of all elaborate ornament, architectural decoration, etc. The delight with which we look on the fretted front of Rouen Cathedral depends in no small degree on the simple perception of time employed and labor expended in its production. But it is a right, that is, an ennobling pleasure, even in this its lowest phase; and even the pleasure felt by those persons who praise a drawing for its "finish," or its "work," which is one precisely of the same kind, would be right, if it did not imply a want of perception of the higher powers which render work unnecessary. If to the evidence of labor be added that of strength or dexterity, the sensation of power is yet increased; if to strength and dexterity be added that of ingenuity and judgment, it is multiplied tenfold, and so on, through all the subjects of action of body or mind, we receive the more exalted pleasure from the more exalted power.

§ 3. But are received from whatever has been the subject of power. The meaning of the word "excellence."

So far the nature and effects of ideas of power cannot but be admitted by all. But the circumstance which I wish especially to insist upon, with respect to them, is one which may not, perhaps, be so readily allowed, namely, that they are independent of the nature or worthiness of the object from which they are received, and that whatever has been the subject of a great power, whether there be intrinsic and apparent worthiness in itself or not, bears with it the evidence of having been so, and is capable of giving the ideas of power, and the consequent pleasures, in their full degree. For observe, that a thing is not properly said to have been the result of a great power, on which only some part of that power has been expended. A nut may be cracked by a steam-engine, but it has not, in being so, been the subject of the power of the engine. And thus it is falsely said of great men, that they waste their lofty powers on unworthy objects: the object may be dangerous or useless, but, as far as the phrase has reference to difficulty of performance, it cannot be unworthy of the power which it brings into exertion, because nothing can become a subject of action to a greater power which can be accomplished by a less, any more than bodily strength can be exerted where there is nothing to resist it.

So, then, men may let their great powers lie dormant, while they employ their mean and petty powers on mean and petty objects; but it is physically impossible to employ a great power, except on a great object. Consequently, wherever power of any kind or degree has been exerted, the marks and evidence of it are stamped upon its results: it is impossible that it should be lost or wasted, or without record, even in the "estimation of a hair:" and therefore, whatever has been the subject of a great power bears about with it the image of that which created it, and is what is commonly called "excellent." And this is the true meaning of the word excellent, as distinguished from the terms, "beautiful," "useful," "good," etc.; and we shall always, in future, use the word excellent, as signifying that the thing to which it is applied required a great power for its production.*

---

* Of course the word "excellent" is primarily a mere synonym with "surpassing," and when applied to persons, has the general meaning given by Johnson—"the state of abounding in any good quality." But when applied to things it has always reference to the power by which they are produced. We talk of excellent music or poetry, because it is difficult to compose or write such, but never of excellent flowers, because all flowers being the result of the same power, must

§ 4. What is necessary to the distinguishing of excellence.

The faculty of perceiving what powers are required for the production of a thing, is the faculty of perceiving excellence. It is this faculty in which men, even of the most cultivated taste, must always be wanting, unless they have added practice to reflection; because none can estimate the power manifested in victory, unless they have personally measured the strength to be overcome. Though, therefore, it is possible, by the cultivation of sensibility and judgment, to become capable of distinguishing what is beautiful, it is totally impossible, without practice and knowledge, to distinguish or feel what is excellent. The beauty or the truth of Titian's flesh-tint may be appreciated by all; but it is only to the artist, whose multiplied hours of toil have not reached the slightest resemblance of one of its tones, that its *excellence* is manifest.

§ 5. The pleasure attendant on conquering difficulties is right.

Wherever, then, difficulty has been overcome, there is excellence: and therefore, in order to prove a work excellent, we have only to prove the difficulty of its production: whether it be useful or beautiful is another question; its excellence depends on its difficulty alone. Nor is it a false or diseased taste which looks for the overcoming of difficulties, and has pleasure in it, even without any view to resultant good. It has been made part of our moral nature that we should have a pleasure in encountering and conquering opposition, for the sake of the struggle and the victory, not for the sake of any after result; and not only our own victory, but the perception of that of another, is in all cases the source of pure and ennobling pleasure. And if we often hear it said, and truly said, that an artist has erred by seeking rather to show his skill in overcoming technical difficul-

---

be equally excellent. We distinguish them only as beautiful or useful, and therefore, as there is no other one word to signify that quality of a thing produced by which it pleases us merely as the result of power, and as the term "excellent" is more frequently used in this sense than in any other, I choose to limit it at once to this sense, and I wish it, when I use it in future, to be so understood.

ties, than to reach a great end, be it observed that he is only blamed because he has sought to conquer an inferior difficulty rather than a great one; for it is much easier to overcome technical difficulties than to reach a great end. Whenever the visible victory over difficulties is found painful or in false taste, it is owing to the preference of an inferior to a great difficulty, or to the false estimate of what is difficult and what is not. It is far more difficult to be simple than to be complicated; far more difficult to sacrifice skill and cease exertion in the proper place, than to expend both indiscriminately. We shall find, in the course of our investigation, that beauty and difficulty go together; and that they are only mean and paltry difficulties which it is wrong or contemptible to wrestle with. Be it remembered then—Power is never wasted. Whatever power has been employed, produces excellence in proportion to its own dignity and exertion; and the faculty of perceiving this exertion, and appreciating this dignity, is the faculty of perceiving excellence.

CHAPTER IV.

OF IDEAS OF IMITATION.

§ 1. False use of the term "imitation" by many writers of art.

Fuseli, in his lectures, and many other persons of equally just and accurate habits of thought, (among others, S. T. Coleridge,) make a distinction between imitation and copying, representing the first as the legitimate function of art—the latter as its corruption; but as such a distinction is by no means warranted, or explained by the common meaning of the words themselves, it is not easy to comprehend exactly in what sense they are used by those writers. And though, reasoning from the context, I can understand what ideas those words stand for in their minds, I cannot allow the terms to be properly used as symbols of those ideas, which (especially in the case of the word Imitation) are exceedingly complex, and totally different from what most people would understand by the term. And by men of less accurate thought, the word is used still more vaguely or falsely. For instance, Burke (Treatise on the Sublime, part i. sect. 16) says, "When the object represented in poetry or painting is such as we could have no desire of seeing in the reality, then we may be sure that its power in poetry or painting is owing to the power of *imitation*." In which case the real pleasure may be in what we have been just speaking of, the dexterity of the artist's hand; or it may be in a beautiful or singular arrangement of colors, or a thoughtful chiaroscuro, or in the pure beauty of certain forms which art forces on our notice, though we should not have observed them in the reality; and I conceive that none of these sources of pleasure are in any way expressed or intimated by the term "imitation."

But there is one source of pleasure in works of art totally different from all these, which I conceive to be properly and accurately expressed by the word "imitation:" one which, though constantly confused in reasoning, because it is always associated in fact, with other means of pleasure, is totally separated from them in its nature, and is the real basis of whatever complicated or various meaning may be afterwards attached to the word in the minds of men.

I wish to point out this distinct source of pleasure clearly at once, and only to use the word "imitation" in reference to it.

§ 2. Real meaning of the term.

Whenever anything looks like what it is not, the resemblance being so great as *nearly* to deceive, we feel a kind of pleasurable surprise, an agreeable excitement of mind, exactly the same in its nature as that which we receive from juggling. Whenever we perceive this in something produced by art, that is to say, whenever the work is seen to resemble something which we know it is not, we receive what I call an idea of imitation. *Why* such ideas are pleasing, it would be out of our present purpose to inquire; we only know that there is no man who does not

§ 3. What is requisite to the sense of imitation.

feel pleasure in his animal nature from gentle surprise, and that such surprise can be excited in no more distinct manner than by the evidence that a thing is not what it appears to be.* Now two things are requisite to our complete and more pleasurable perception of this: first, that the resemblance be so perfect as to amount to a deception; secondly, that there be some means of proving at the same moment that it *is* a deception. The most perfect ideas and pleasures of imitation are, therefore, when one sense is contradicted by another, both bearing as positive evidence on the subject as each is capable of alone; as when the eye says a thing is round, and the finger says it is flat; they are, therefore, never felt in so high a degree as in painting, where appearance of projection, roughness, hair, velvet, etc., are given with a smooth surface, or in wax-work, where the first evidence of the senses is perpetually contradicted by their experience; but the moment we come to marble, our definition checks us, for a marble figure does not look like what it is not: it looks like marble, and like the form of a man, but then it *is* marble, and it *is* the form of a man. It does not look like a man, which it is not, but like the form of a man, which it is. Form is form, *bona fide* and actual, whether in marble or in flesh—not an imitation or resemblance of form, but real form. The chalk outline of the bough of a tree on paper, is not an imitation; it looks like chalk and paper—not like wood, and that which it suggests to the mind is not properly said to be *like* the form of a bough, it *is* the form of a bough. Now, then, we see the limits of an idea of imitation; it extends only to the sensation of trickery and deception occasioned by a thing's intentionally seeming different from what it is; and the degree of the pleasure depends on the degree of difference and the perfection of the resemblance, not on the nature of the thing resembled. The simple pleasure in the imitation would be precisely of the same degree, (if the accuracy could be equal,) whether the subject of it were the hero or his horse. There are other collateral sources of pleasure, which are necessarily associated with this, but that part of the pleasure which depends on the imitation is the same in both.

---

* *ουλλογιϑμύς ἐττιγ, ο̂τι τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο.*—Arist. Rhet. 1, 11, 23.

§ 4. The pleasure resulting from imitation the most contemptible that can be derived from art.

Ideas of imitation, then, act by producing the simple pleasure of surprise, and that not of surprise in its highest sense and function, but of the mean and paltry surprise which is felt in jugglery. These ideas and pleasures are the most contemptible which can be received from art; first, because it is necessary to their enjoyment that the mind should reject the impression and address of the thing represented, and fix itself only upon the reflection that it is not what it seems to be. All high or noble emotion or thought are thus rendered physically impossible, while the mind exults in what is very like a strictly sensual pleasure. We may consider tears as a result of agony or of art, whichever we please, but not of both at the same moment. If we are surprised by them as an attainment of the one, it is impossible we can be moved by them as a sign of the other.

§ 5. Imitation is only of contemptible subjects.

Ideas of imitation are contemptible in the second place, because not only do they preclude the spectator from enjoying inherent beauty in the subject, but they can only be received from mean and paltry subjects, because it is impossible to imitate anything really great. We can "paint a cat or a fiddle, so that they look as if we could take them up;" but we cannot imitate the ocean, or the Alps. We can imitate fruit, but not a tree; flowers, but not a pasture; cut-glass, but not the rainbow. All pictures in which deceptive powers of imitation are displayed are therefore either of contemptible subjects, or have the imitation shown in contemptible parts of them, bits of dress, jewels, furniture, etc.

§ 6. Imitation is contemptible because it is easy.

Thirdly, these ideas are contemptible, because no ideas of power are associated with them; to the ignorant, imitation, indeed, seems difficult, and its success praiseworthy, but even they can by no possibility see more in the artist than they do in a juggler, who arrives at a strange end by means with which they are unacquainted. To the instructed, the juggler is by far the more respectable artist of the two, for they know sleight of hand to be an art of immensely more difficult acquirement, and to imply more ingenuity in the artist than a power of deceptive imitation in painting, which requires nothing more for its attainment than a true eye, a steady hand, and moderate industry—qualities which in no degree separate the imitative artist from a watch-maker, pin-maker, or any other neat-handed artificer. These remarks do not apply to the art of the Diorama, or the stage, where the pleasure is not dependent on the imitation, but is the same which we should receive from nature herself, only far inferior in degree. It is a noble pleasure ; but we shall see in the course of our investigation, both that it is inferior to that which we receive when there is no deception at all, and why it is so.

§ 7. Recapitulation.

Whenever then in future, I speak of ideas of imitation, I wish to be understood to mean the immediate and present perception that something produced by art is not what it seems to be. I prefer saying "that it is not what it seems to be," to saying "that it seems to be what it is not," because we perceive at once what it seems to be, and the idea of imitation, and the consequent pleasure, result from the subsequent perception of its being something else—flat, for instance, when we thought it was round.

CHAPTER V.

OF IDEAS OF TRUTH.

THE word truth, as applied to art, signifies the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature.

§ 1. Meaning of the word "truth" as applied to art.

We receive an idea of truth, then, when we perceive the faithfulness of such a statement. The difference between ideas of truth and of imitation lies chiefly in the following points.

§ 2. First difference between truth and imitation.

First,—Imitation can only be of something material, but truth has reference to statements both of the qualities of material things, and of emotions, impressions and thoughts. There is a moral as well as material truth,—a truth of impression as well as of form,—of thought as well as of matter; and the truth of impression and thought is a thousand times the more important of the two. Hence, truth is a term of universal application, but imitation is limited to that narrow field of art which takes cognizance only of material things.

§ 3. Second difference.

Secondly,—Truth may be stated by any signs or symbols which have a definite signification in the minds of those to whom they are addressed, although such signs be themselves no image nor likeness of anything. Whatever can excite in the mind the conception of certain facts, can give ideas of truth, though it be in no degree the imitation or resemblance of those facts. If there be—we do not say there is—but if there be in painting anything which operates, as words do, not by resembling anything, but by being taken as a symbol and substitute for it, and thus inducing the effect of it, then this channel of communication can convey uncorrupted truth, though it do not in any degree resemble the facts whose conception it induces. But ideas of imitation, of course, require the likeness of the object. They speak to the perceptive faculties only: truth to the conceptive.

§ 4. Third difference.

Thirdly,—And in consequence of what is above stated, an idea of truth exists in the statement of *one* attribute of anything, but an idea of imitation requires the resemblance of as many attributes as we are usually cognizant of in its real presence. A pencil outline of the bough of a tree on white paper is a statement of a certain number of facts of form. It does not yet amount to the imitation of anything. The idea of that form is not given in nature by lines at all, still less by black lines with a white space between them. But those lines convey to the mind a distinct impression of a certain number of facts, which it recognizes as agreeable with its previous impressions of the bough of a tree; and it receives, therefore, an idea of truth. If, instead of two lines, we give a dark form with the brush, we convey information of a certain relation of shade between the bough and sky, recognizable for another idea of truth; but we have still no imitation, for the white paper is not the least like air, nor the black shadow like wood. It is not until after a certain number of ideas of truth have been collected together, that we arrive at an idea of imitation.

§ 5. No accurate truths necessary to imitation.

Hence it might at first sight appear, that an idea of imitation, inasmuch as several ideas of truth were united in it, was nobler than a simple idea of truth. And if it were necessary that the ideas of truth should be perfect, or should be subjects of contemplation *as such*, it would be so. But, observe, we require to produce the effect of imitation only so many and such ideas of truth as the *senses* are usually cognizant of. Now the senses are not usually, nor unless they be especially devoted to the service, cognizant, with accuracy, of any truths but those of space and projection. It requires long study and attention before they give certain evidence of even the simplest truths of form. For instance, the quay on which the figure is sitting, with his hand at his eyes, in Claude's seaport, No. 14, in the National Gallery, is egregiously out of perspective. The eye of this artist, with all his study, had thus not acquired the power of taking cognizance of the apparent form even of a simple parallelopiped. How much less of the complicated forms of boughs, leaves, or limbs? Although, therefore, something resembling the real form is necessary to deception, this something is not to be called a *truth* of form; for, strictly speaking, there are no degrees of truth, there are only degrees of approach to it; and an approach to it, whose feebleness and imperfection would instantly offend and give pain to a mind really capable of distinguishing truth, is yet quite sufficient for all the purposes of deceptive imagination. It is the same with regard to color. If we were to paint a tree sky-blue, or a dog rose-pink, the discernment of the public would be keen enough to discover the falsehood; but, so that there be just so much approach to truth of color as may come up to the common idea of it in men's minds, that is to say, if the trees be all bright green, and flesh unbroken buff, and ground unbroken brown, though all the real and refined truths of color be wholly omitted, or rather defied and contradicted, there is yet quite enough for all purposes of imitation. The only facts then, which we are usually and certainly cognizant of, are those of distance and projection, and if these be tolerably given, with something like truth of form and color to assist them, the idea of imitation is complete. I would undertake to paint an arm, with every muscle out of its place, and every bone of false form and dislocated articulation, and yet to observe certain coarse and broad resemblances of true outline, which, with careful shading, would induce deception, and draw down the praise and delight of the discerning public. The other day at Bruges, while I was endeavoring to set down in my note-book something of the ineffable expression of the Madonna in the cathedral, a French amateur came up to me, to inquire if I had seen the modern French pictures in a neighboring church. I had not, but felt little inclined to leave my marble for all the canvas that ever suffered from French brushes. My apathy was attacked with gradually increasing energy of praise. Rubens never executed—Titian never colored anything like them. I thought this highly probable, and still sat quiet. The voice continued at my ear. "Parbleu, Monsieur, Michel Ange n'a rien produit de plus beau!" "De plus *beau?*" repeated I, wishing to know what particular excellences of Michael Angelo were to be intimated by this expression. "Monsieur, on ne peut plus—c'est un tableau admirable—inconcevable: Monsieur," said the Frenchman, lifting up his hands to heaven, as he concentrated in one conclusive and overwhelming proposition the qualities which were to outshine Rubens and overpower Buonaroti—"Monsieur, IL SORT!"

This gentleman could only perceive two truths—flesh color and projection. These constituted his notion of the perfection of painting; because they unite all that is necessary for deception. He was not therefore cognizant of many ideas of truth, though perfectly cognizant of ideas of imitation.

§ 6. Ideas of truth are inconsistent with ideas of imitation.

We shall see, in the course of our investigation of ideas of truth, that ideas of imitation not only do not imply their presence, but even are inconsistent with it; and that pictures which imitate so as to deceive, are never true. But this is not the place for the proof of this; at present we have only to insist on the last and greatest distinction between ideas of truth and of imitation—that the mind, in receiving one of the former, dwells upon its own conception of the fact, or form, or feeling stated, and is occupied only with the qualities and character of that fact or form, considering it as real and existing, being all the while totally regardless of the signs or symbols by which the notion of it has been conveyed. These signs have no pretence, nor hypocrisy, nor legerdemain about them;—there is nothing to be found out, or sifted, or surprised in them;—they bear their message simply and clearly, and it is that message which the mind takes from them and dwells upon, regardless of the language in which it is delivered. But the mind, in receiving an idea of imitation, is wholly occupied in finding out that what has been suggested to it is not what it appears to be: it does not dwell on the suggestion, but on the perception that it is a false suggestion: it derives its pleasure, not from the contemplation of a truth, but from the discovery of a falsehood. So that the moment ideas of truth are grouped together, so as to give rise to an idea of imitation, they change their very nature—lose their essence as ideas of truth—and are corrupted and degraded, so as to share in the treachery of what they have produced. Hence, finally, ideas of truth are the foundation, and ideas of imitation the destruction, of all art. We shall be better able to appreciate their relative dignity after the investigation which we propose of the functions of the former; but we may as well now express the conclusion to which we shall then be led—that no picture can be good which deceives by its imitation, for the very reason that nothing can be beautiful which is not true.

CHAPTER VI.

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

§ 1. Definition of the term "beautiful."

Any material object which can give us pleasure in the simple contemplation of its outward qualities without any direct and definite exertion of the intellect, I call in some way, or in some degree, beautiful. Why we receive pleasure from some forms and colors, and not from others, is no more to be asked or answered than why we like sugar and dislike wormwood. The utmost subtilty of investigation will only lead us to ultimate instincts and principles of human nature, for which no farther reason can be given than the simple will of the Deity that we should be so created. We may, indeed, perceive, as far as we are acquainted with His nature, that we have been so constructed as, when in a healthy and cultivated state of mind, to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature; but we do not receive pleasure from them *because* they are illustrative of it, nor from any perception that they are illustrative of it, but instinctively and necessarily, as we derive sensual pleasure from the scent of a rose. On these primary principles of our nature, education and accident operate to an unlimited extent; they may be cultivated or checked, directed or diverted, gifted by right guidance with the most acute and faultless sense, or subjected by neglect to every phase of error and disease. He who has followed up these natural laws of aversion and desire, rendering them more and more authoritative by constant obedience, so as to derive pleasure always from that which God originally intended should give him pleasure, and who derives the greatest possible sum of pleasure from any given object, is a man of taste.

§ 2. Definition of the term "taste."

This, then, is the real meaning of this disputed word. Perfect taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material sources which are attractive to our moral nature in its purity and perfection. He who receives little pleasure from these sources, wants taste ; he who receives pleasure from any other sources, has false or bad taste.

§ 3. Distinction between taste and judgment.

And it is thus that the term "taste" is to be distinguished from that of "judgment," with which it is constantly confounded. Judgment is a general term, expressing definite action of the intellect, and applicable to every kind of subject which can be submitted to it. There may be judgment of congruity, judgment of truth, judgment of justice, and judgment of difficulty and excellence. But all these exertions of the intellect are totally distinct from taste, properly so called, which is the instinctive and instant preferring of one material object to another without any obvious reason, except that it is proper to human nature in its perfection so to do.

§ 4. How far beauty may become intellectual.

Observe, however, I do not mean by excluding direct exertion of the intellect from ideas of beauty, to assert that beauty has no effect upon nor connection with the intellect. All our moral feelings are so inwoven with our intellectual powers, that we cannot affect the one without in some degree addressing the other ; and in all high ideas of beauty, it is more than probable that much of the pleasure depends on delicate and untraceable perceptions of fitness, propriety, and relation, which are purely intellectual, and through which we arrive at our noblest ideas of what is commonly and rightly called "intellectual beauty." But there is yet no immediate *exertion* of the intellect ; that is to say, if a person receiving even the noblest ideas of simple beauty be asked *why* he likes the object exciting them, he will not be able to give any distinct reason, nor to trace in his mind any formed thought, to which he can appeal as a source of pleasure. He will say that the thing gratifies, fills, hallows, exalts his mind, but he will not be able to say why, or how. If he can, and if he can show that he perceives in the object any expression of distinct thought, he has received more than an idea of beauty—it is an idea of relation.

§ 5. The high rank and function of ideas of beauty.

Ideas of beauty are among the noblest which can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and purifying it according to their degree ; and it would appear that we are intended by the Deity to be constantly under their influence, because there is not one single object in nature which is not capable of conveying them, and which, to the rightly perceiving mind, does not present an incalculably greater number of beautiful than of deformed parts ; there being in fact scarcely anything, in pure, undiseased nature, like positive deformity, but only degrees of beauty, or such slight and rare points of permitted contrast as may render all around them more valuable by their opposition, spots of blackness in creation, to make its colors felt.

§ 6. Meaning of the term "ideal beauty."

But although everything in nature is more or less beautiful, every species of object has its own kind and degree of beauty ; some being in their own nature more beautiful than others, and few, if any, individuals possessing the utmost degree of beauty of which the species is capable. This utmost degree of specific beauty, necessarily coexistent with the utmost perfection of the object in other respects, is the ideal of the object.

Ideas of beauty, then, be it remembered, are the subjects of moral, but not of intellectual perception. By the investigation of them we shall be led to the knowledge of the ideal subjects of art.

CHAPTER VII.

OF IDEAS OF RELATION.

§ 1. General meaning of the term.

I USE this term rather as one of convenience than as adequately expressive of the vast class of ideas which I wish to be comprehended under it, namely, all those conveyable by art, which are the subjects of distinct intellectual perception and action, and which are therefore worthy of the name of thoughts. But as every thought, or definite exertion of intellect, implies two subjects, and some connection or relation inferred between them, the term "ideas of relation" is not incorrect, though it is inexpressive.

§ 2. What ideas are to be comprehended under it.

Under this head must be arranged everything productive of expression, sentiment, and character, whether in figures or landscapes, (for there may be as much definite expression and marked carrying out of particular thoughts in the treatment of inanimate as of animate nature,) everything relating to the conception of the subject and to the congruity and relation of its parts; not as they enhance each other's beauty by known and constant laws of composition, but as they give each other expression and meaning, by particular application, requiring distinct thought to discover or to enjoy: the choice, for instance, of a particular lurid or appalling light, to illustrate an incident in itself terrible, or of a particular tone of pure color to prepare the mind for the expression of refined and delicate feeling; and, in a still higher sense, the invention of such incidents and thoughts as can be expressed in words as well as on canvas, and are totally independent of any means of art but such as may serve for the bare suggestion of them. The principal object in the foreground of Turner's "Building of Carthage" is a group of children sailing toy boats. The exquisite choice of this incident, as expressive of the ruling passion, which was to be the source of future greatness, in preference to the tumult of busy stone-masons or arming soldiers, is quite as appreciable when it is told as when it is seen,—it has nothing to do with the technicalities of painting; a scratch of the pen would have conveyed the idea and spoken to the intellect as much as the elaborate realizations of color. Such a thought as this is something far above all art; it is epic poetry of the highest order. Claude, in subjects of the same kind, commonly introduces people carrying red trunks with iron locks about, and dwells, with infantine delight, on the lustre of the leather and the ornaments of the iron. The intellect can have no occupation here ; we must look to the imitation or to nothing. Consequently, Turner rises above Claude in the very first instant of the conception of his picture, and acquires an intellectual superiority which no powers of the draughtsman or the artist (supposing that such existed in his antagonist) could ever wrest from him.

§ 3. The exceeding nobility of these ideas.

Such are the function and force of ideas of relation. They are what I have asserted in the second chapter of this section to be the noblest subjects of art. Dependent upon it only for expression, they cause all the rest of its complicated sources of pleasure to take, in comparison with them, the place of mere language or decoration ; nay, even the noblest ideas of beauty sink at once beside these into subordination and subjection. It would add little to the influence of Landseer's picture above instanced, Chap. II., § 4, that the form of the dog should be conceived with every perfection of curve and color which its nature was capable of, and that the ideal lines should be carried out with the science of a Praxiteles ; nay, the instant that the beauty so obtained interfered with the impression of agony and desolation, and drew the mind away from the feeling of the animal to its outward form, that instant would the picture become monstrous and degraded. The utmost glory of the human body is a mean subject of contemplation, compared to the emotion, exertion and character of that which animates it ; the lustre of the limbs of the Aphrodite is faint beside that of the brow of the Madonna ; and the divine form of the Greek god, except as it is the incarnation and expression of divine mind, is degraded beside the passion and the prophecy of the vaults of the Sistine.

§ 4. Why no subdivision of so extensive a class is necessary.

Ideas of relation are, of course, with respect to art generally, the most extensive as the most important source of pleasure ; and if we proposed entering upon the criticism of historical works, it would be absurd to attempt to do so without further subdivision and arrangement. But the old landscape painters got over so much canvas without either exercise of, or appeal to, the intellect, that we shall be little troubled with the subject as far as they are concerned ; and whatever subdivision we may adopt, as it will therefore have particular reference to the works of modern artists, will be better understood when we have obtained some knowledge of them in less important points.

By the term "ideas of relation," then, I mean in future to express all those sources of pleasure, which involve and require, at the instant of their perception, active exertion of the intellectual powers.

SECTION II.

OF POWER.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF POWER.

§ 1. No necessity for detailed study of ideas of imitation.

We have seen in the last section, what classes of ideas may be conveyed by art, and we have been able so far to appreciate their relative worth as to see, that from the list, as it is to be applied to the purposes of legitimate criticism, we may at once throw out the ideas of imitation; first, because, as we have shown, they are unworthy the pursuit of the artist; and secondly, because they are nothing more than the result of a particular association of ideas of truth. In examining the truth of art, therefore, we shall be compelled to take notice of those particular truths, whose association gives rise to the ideas of imitation. We shall then see more clearly the meanness of those truths, and we shall find ourselves able to use them as tests of vice in art, saying of a picture,—" It deceives, therefore it must be bad."

§ 2. Nor for separate study of ideas of power.

Ideas of power, in the same way, cannot be completely viewed as a separate class; not because they are mean or unimportant, but because they are almost always associated with, or dependent upon, some of the higher ideas of truth, beauty, or relation, rendered with decision or velocity. That power which delights us in the chalk sketch of a great painter is not one of the fingers, not like that of the writing-master, mere dexterity of hand. It is the accuracy and certainty of the knowledge, rendered evident by its rapid and fearless expression, which is the real source of pleasure; and so upon each difficulty of art, whether it be to know, or to relate, or to invent, the sensation of power is attendant, when we see that difficulty totally and swiftly vanquished. Hence, as we determine what is otherwise desirable in art, we shall gradually develop the sources of the ideas of power; and if there be anything difficult which is not otherwise desirable, it must be afterwards considered separately.

§ 3. Except under one particular form.

But it will be necessary at present to notice a particular form of the ideas of power, which is partially independent of knowledge of truth, or difficulty, and which is apt to corrupt the judgment of the critic, and debase the work of the artist. It is evident that the conception of power which we receive from a calculation of unseen difficulty, and an estimate of unseen strength, can never be so impressive as that which we receive from the present sensation or sight of the one resisting, and the other overwhelming. In the one case the power is imagined, and in the other felt.

§ 4. There are two modes of receiving ideas of power, commonly inconsistent.

There are thus two modes in which we receive the conception of power; one, the most just, when by a perfect knowledge of the difficulty to be overcome, and the means employed, we form a right estimate of the faculties exerted; the other, when without possessing such intimate and accurate knowledge, we are impressed by a sensation of power in visible action. If these two modes of receiving the impression agree in the result, and if the sensation be equal to the estimate, we receive the utmost possible idea of power. But this is the case perhaps with the works of only one man out of the whole circle of the fathers of art, of him to whom we have just referred, Michael Angelo. In others, the estimate and the sensation are constantly unequal, and often contradictory.

§ 5. First reason of the inconsistency.

The first reason of this inconsistency is, that in order to receive a *sensation* of power, we must see it in operation. Its victory, therefore, must not be achieved, but achieving, and therefore imperfect. Thus we receive a greater sensation of power from the half-hewn limbs of the Twilight to the Day of the Cappella de' Medici, than even from the divine inebriety of the Bacchus in the gallery—greater from the life dashed out along the Friezes of the Parthenon, than from the polished limbs of the Apollo,—greater from the ink sketch of the head of Raffaelle's St. Catherine, than from the perfection of its realization.

§ 6. Second reason for the inconsistency.

Another reason of the inconsistency is, that the sensation of power is in proportion to the apparent inadequacy of the means to the end; so that the impression is much greater from a partial success attained with slight effort, than from perfect success attained with greater proportional effort. Now, in all art, every touch or effort does individually less in proportion as the work approaches perfection. The first five chalk touches bring a head into existence out of nothing. No five touches in the whole course of the work will ever do so much as these, and the difference made by each touch is more and more imperceptible as the work approaches completion. Consequently, the ratio between the means employed and the effect produced is constantly decreasing, and therefore the least sensation of power is received from the most perfect work.

§ 7. The sensation of power ought not to be sought in imperfect art.

It is thus evident that there are sensations of power about imperfect art, so that it be right art as far as it goes, which must always be wanting in its perfection; and that there are sources of pleasure in the hasty sketch and rough hewn block, which are partially wanting in the tinted canvas and the polished marble. But it is nevertheless wrong to prefer the sensation of power to the intellectual perception of it. There is in reality greater power in the completion than in the commencement; and though it be not so manifest to the senses, it ought to have higher influence on the mind; and therefore in praising pictures for the ideas of power they convey, we must not look to the keenest sensation, but to the highest estimate, accompanied with as much of the sensation as is compatible with it; and thus we shall consider those pictures as conveying the highest ideas of power which attain the most *perfect* end with the slightest possible means; not, observe, those in which, though much has been done with little, all has not been done, but from the picture, in which *all* has been done, and yet not a touch thrown away. The quantity of work in the sketch is necessarily less in proportion to the effect obtained than in the picture; but yet the picture involves the greater power, if out of all the additional labor bestowed on it, not a touch has been lost.

§ 8. Instances in pictures of modern artists.

For instance, there are few drawings of the present day that involve greater sensations of power than those of Frederick Tayler. Every dash tells, and the quantity of effect obtained is enormous, in proportion to the apparent means. But the effect obtained is not complete. Brilliant, beautiful, and right, as a sketch, the work is still far from perfection, as a drawing. On the contrary, there are few drawings of the present day that bear evidence of more labor bestowed, or more complicated means employed, than those of John Lewis. The result does not, at first, so much convey an impression of inherent power as of prolonged exertion; but the result is complete. Water-color drawing can be carried no farther; nothing has been left unfinished or untold. And on examination of the means employed, it is found and felt that not one touch out of the thousands employed has been thrown away;—that not one dot nor dash could be spared without loss of effect;—and that the exertion has been as swift as it has been prolonged—as bold as it has been persevering. The power involved in such a picture is of the highest order, and the enduring pleasure following on the estimate of it pure.

§ 9. Connection between ideas of power and modes of execution.

But there is still farther ground for caution in pursuing the sensation of power, connected with the particular characters and modes of execution. This we shall be better able to understand by briefly reviewing the various excellences which may belong to execution, and give pleasure in it; though the full determination of what is desirable in it, and the critical examination of the execution of different artists, must be deferred, as will be immediately seen, until we are more fully acquainted with the principles of truth.

CHAPTER II.

OF IDEAS OF POWER, AS THEY ARE DEPENDENT UPON EXECUTION.

§ 1. Meaning of the term "execution."

By the term "execution," I understand the right mechanical use of the means of art to produce a given end.

§ 2. The first quality of execution is truth.

All qualities of execution, properly so called, are influenced by, and in a great degree dependent on, a far higher power than that of mere execution, —knowledge of truth. For exactly in proportion as an artist is certain of his end, will he be swift and simple in his means; and, as he is accurate and deep in his knowledge, will he be refined and precise in his touch. The first merit of manipulation, then, is that delicate and ceaseless expression of refined truth which is carried out to the last touch, and shadow of a touch, and which makes every hairsbreadth of importance, and every gradation full of meaning. It is not, properly speaking, execution; but it is the only source of difference between the execution of a commonplace and of a perfect artist. The lowest draughtsman, if he have spent the same time in handling the brush, may be equal to the highest in the other qualities of execution (in swiftness, simplicity, and decision;) but not in truth. It is in the perfection and precision of the instantaneous line that the claim to immortality is laid. And if this truth of truths be present, all the other qualities of execution may well be spared; and to those artists who wish to excuse their ignorance and inaccuracy by a species of execution which is a perpetual proclamation, "qu'ils n'ont demeuré qu'un quart d'heure a le faire," we may reply with the truthful Alceste, "Monsieur, le temps ne fait rien a l'affaire."

§ 3. The second, simplicity.

The second quality of execution is simplicity. The more unpretending, quiet, and retiring the means, the more impressive their effect. Any ostentation, brilliancy, or pretension of touch,—any exhibition of power or quickness, merely as such, above all, any attempt to render lines attractive at the expense of their meaning, is vice.

§ 4. The third, mystery.

The third is mystery. Nature is always mysterious and secret in the use of her means; and art is always likest her when it is most inexplicable. That execution which is the most incomprehensible, and which therefore defies imitation, (other qualities being supposed alike,) is the best.

§ 5. The fourth, inadequacy; and the fifth, decision.

The fourth is inadequacy. The less sufficient the means appear to the end, the greater (as has been already noticed) will be the sensation of power.

The fifth is decision: the appearance, that is, that whatever is done, has been done fearlessly and at once; because this gives us the impression that both the fact to be represented, and the means necessary to its representation, were perfectly known.

§ 6. The sixth, velocity.

The sixth is velocity. Not only is velocity, or the appearance of it, agreeable as decision is, because it gives ideas of power and knowledge; but of two touches, as nearly as possible the same in other respects, the quickest will invariably be the best. Truth being supposed equally present in the shape and direction of both, there will be more evenness, grace and variety, in the quick one than in the slow one. It will be more agreeable to the eye as a touch or line, and will possess more of the qualities of the lines of nature—gradation, uncertainty, and unity.

§ 7. Strangeness an illegitimate source of pleasure in execution.

These six qualities are the only perfectly legitimate sources of pleasure in execution; but I might have added a seventh—strangeness, which in many cases is productive of a pleasure not altogether mean or degrading, though scarcely right. Supposing the other higher qualities first secured, it adds in no small degree to our impression of the artist's knowledge, if the means used be such as we should never have thought of, or should have thought adapted to a contrary effect. Let us, for instance, compare the execution of the bull's head in the left hand lowest corner of the Adoration of the Magi, in the Museum at Antwerp, with that in Berghem's landscape, No. 132 in the Dulwich gallery. Rubens first scratches horizontally over his canvas a thin grayish brown, transparent and even, very much the color of light wainscot; the horizontal strokes of the bristles being left so evident, that the whole might be taken for an imitation of wood, were it not for its transparency. On this ground the eye, nostril, and outline of the cheek are given with two or three rude, brown touches (about three or four minutes' work in all), though the head is colossal. The background is then laid in with thick, solid, warm white, actually projecting all round the head, leaving it in dark intaglio. Finally, five thin and scratchy strokes of very cold bluish white are struck for the high light on the forehead and nose, and the head is complete. Seen within a yard of the canvas, it looks actually transparent—a flimsy, meaningless, distant shadow; while the background looks solid, projecting and near. From the right distance, (ten or twelve yards off, whence alone the whole of the picture can be seen,) it is a complete, rich, substantial, and living realization of the projecting head of the animal; while the background falls far behind. Now there is no slight nor mean pleasure in perceiving such a result attained by means so strange. By Berghem, on the other hand, a dark background is first laid in with exquisite delicacy and transparency, and on this the cow's head is actually modelled in luminous white, the separate locks of hair projecting from the canvas. No surprise, nor much pleasure of any kind, would be attendant on this execution, even were the result equally successful; and what little pleasure we had in it, vanishes, when on retiring from the picture, we find the head shining like a distant lantern, instead of substantial or near. Yet strangeness is not to be considered as a legitimate source of pleasure. That means which is most conducive to the end, should always be the most pleasurable ; and that which is most conducive to the end, can be strange only to the ignorance of the spectator. This kind of pleasure is illegitimate, therefore, because it implies and requires, in those who feel it, ignorance of art.

§ 8. Yet even the legitimate sources of pleasure in execution are inconsistent with each other.

The legitimate sources of pleasure in execution are therefore truth, simplicity, mystery, inadequacy, decision, and velocity. But of these, be it observed, some are so far inconsistent with others, that they cannot be united in high degrees. Mystery with inadequacy, for instance ; since to see that the means are inadequate, we must see what they are. Now the first three are the great qualities of execution, and the last three are the attractive ones, because on them are chiefly attendant the ideas of power. By the first three the attention is withdrawn from the means and fixed on the result : by the last three, withdrawn from the result and fixed on the means. To see that execution is swift or that it is decided, we must look away from its creation to observe it in the act of creating ; we must think more of the pallet than of the picture, but simplicity and mystery compel the mind to leave the means and fix itself on the conception. Hence the danger of too great fondness for those sensations of power which are associated with the three last qualities of execution ; for although it is most desirable that these should be present as far as they are consistent with the others, and though their visible absence is always painful and wrong, yet the moment the higher qualities are sacrificed to them in the least degree, we have a brilliant vice. Berghem and Salvator Rosa are good instances of vicious execution dependent on too great fondness for sensations of power, vicious because intrusive and attractive in itself, instead of being subordinate to its results and forgotten in them. There is perhaps no greater stum-

§ 9. And fondness for ideas of power leads to the adoption of the lowest.

bling-block in the artist's way, than the tendency to sacrifice truth and simplicity to decision and velocity,* captivating qualities, easy of attainment, and sure to attract attention and praise, while the delicate degree of truth which is at first sacrificed to them is so totally unappreciable by the majority of spectators, so difficult of attainment to the artist, that it is no wonder that efforts so arduous and unrewarded should be abandoned.

§ 10. Therefore perilous.

But if the temptation be once yielded to, its consequences are fatal; there is no pause in the fall. I could name a celebrated modern artist—once a man of the highest power and promise, who is a glaring instance of the peril of such a course. Misled by the undue popularity of his swift execution, he has sacrificed to it, first precision, and then truth, and her associate, beauty. What was first neglect of nature, has become contradiction of her; what was once imperfection, is now falsehood; and all that was meritorious in his manner, is becoming the worst, because the most attractive of vices; decision without a foundation, and swiftness without an end.

§ 11. Recapitulation.

Such are the principal modes in which the ideas of power may become a dangerous attraction to the artist—a false test to the critic. But in all cases where they lead us astray it will be found that the error is caused by our preferring victory over a small *apparent* difficulty to victory over a great, but concealed one; and so that we keep this distinction constantly in view, (whether with reference to execution or to any other quality of art,) between the sensation and the intellectual estimate of power, we shall always find the ideas of power a just and high source of pleasure in every kind and grade of art.

---

* I have here noticed only noble vices, the sacrifices of one excellence to another legitimate but inferior one. There are, on the other hand, qualities of execution which are often sought for and praised, though scarcely by the class of persons for whom I am writing, in which everything is sacrificed to illegitimate and contemptible sources of pleasure, and these are vice throughout, and have no redeeming quality nor excusing aim. Such is that which is often thought so desirable in the Drawing-master, under the title of boldness, meaning that no touch is ever to be made less than the tenth of an inch broad; such, on the other hand, the softness and smoothness which are the great attraction of Carlo Dolci, and such the exhibition of particular powers and tricks of the hand and fingers, in total forgetfulness of any end whatsoever to be attained thereby, which is especially characteristic of modern engraving. Compare Sect. II. Chap. II. § 21. Note.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE SUBLIME.

It may perhaps be wondered that in the division we have made of our subject, we have taken no notice of the sublime in art, and that in our explanation of that division we have not once used the word.

§ 1. Sublimity is the effect upon the mind of anything above it.

The fact is, that sublimity is not a specific term,—not a term descriptive of the effect of a particular class of ideas. Anything which elevates the mind is sublime, and elevation of mind is produced by the contemplation of greatness of any kind; but chiefly, of course, by the greatness of the noblest things. Sublimity is, therefore, only another word for the effect of greatness upon the feelings. Greatness of matter, space, power, virtue, or beauty, are thus all sublime; and there is perhaps no desirable quality of a work of art, which in its perfection is not, in some way or degree, sublime.

§ 2. Burke's theory of the nature of the sublime incorrect, and why.

I am fully prepared to allow of much ingenuity in Burke's theory of the sublime, as connected with self-preservation. There are few things so great as death; and there is perhaps nothing which banishes all littleness of thought and feeling in an equal degree with its contemplation. Everything, therefore, which in any way points to it, and, therefore, most dangers and powers over which we have little control, are in some degree sublime. But it is not the fear, observe, but the contemplation of death; not the instinctive shudder and struggle of self-preservation, but the deliberate measurement of the doom, which are really great or sublime in feeling. It is not while we shrink, but while we defy, that we receive or convey the highest conceptions of the fate. There is no sublimity in the agony of terror. Whether do we trace it most in the cry to the mountains, "fall on us," and to the hills, "cover us," or in the calmness of the prophecy—"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God?"

§ 3. Danger is sublime, but not the fear of it.

A little reflection will easily convince any one, that so far from the feelings of self-preservation being necessary to the sublime, their greatest action is totally destructive of it; and that there are few feelings less capable of its perception than those of a coward. But the simple conception or idea of greatness of suffering or extent of destruction is sublime, whether there be any connection of that idea with ourselves or not. If we were placed beyond the reach of all peril or pain, the perception of these agencies in their influence on others would not be less sublime, not because peril or pain are sublime in their own nature, but because their contemplation, exciting compassion or fortitude, elevates the mind, and renders meanness of thought impossible.

§ 4. The highest beauty is sublime.

Beauty is not so often felt to be sublime; because, in many kinds of purely material beauty there is some truth in Burke's assertion, that "littleness" is one of its elements. But he who has not felt that there may be beauty without littleness, and that such beauty is a source of the sublime, is yet ignorant of the meaning of the ideal in art.

§ 5. And generally whatever elevates the mind.

I do not mean, in tracing the source of the sublime to greatness, to hamper myself with any fine-spun theory. I take the widest possible ground of investigation, that sublimity is found wherever anything elevates the mind; that is, wherever it contemplates anything above itself, and perceives it to be so. This is the simple philological signification of the word derived from *sublimis;* and will serve us much more easily, and be a far clearer and more evident ground of argument, than any mere metaphysical or ~~more~~ limited definition, while the proof of its justness will be naturally developed by its application to the different branches of art.

§ 6. The former division of the subject is therefore sufficient.

As, therefore, the sublime is not distinct from what is beautiful, nor from other sources of pleasure in art, but is only a particular mode and manifestation of them, my subject will divide itself into the investigation of ideas of truth, beauty, and relation ; and to each of these classes of ideas I destine a separate part of the work. The investigation of ideas of truth will enable us to determine the relative rank of artists as followers and historians of nature.

That of ideas of beauty will lead us to compare them in their attainment, first of what is agreeable in technical matters, then in color and composition, finally and chiefly, in the purity of their conceptions of the ideal.

And that of ideas of relation will lead us to compare them as originators of just thought.

PART II.

OF TRUTH.

SECTION I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

OF IDEAS OF TRUTH IN THEIR CONNECTION WITH THOSE OF BEAUTY AND RELATION.

§ 1. The two great ends of landscape painting are the representation of facts and thoughts.

It cannot but be evident from the above division of the ideas conveyable by art, that the landscape painter must always have two great and distinct ends; the first, to induce in the spectator's mind the faithful conception of any natural objects whatsoever; the second, to guide the spectator's mind to those objects most worthy of its contemplation, and to inform him of the thoughts and feelings with which these were regarded by the artist himself.

In attaining the first end, the painter only places the spectator where he stands himself; he sets him before the landscape and leaves him. The spectator is alone. He may follow out his own thoughts as he would in the natural solitude, or he may remain untouched, unreflecting and regardless, as his disposition may incline him. But he has nothing of thought given to him, no new ideas, no unknown feelings, forced on his attention or his heart. The artist is his conveyance, not his companion,—his horse, not his friend. But in attaining the second end, the artist not only *places* the spectator, but *talks* to him; makes him a sharer in his own strong feelings and quick thoughts; hurries him away in his own enthusiasm; guides him to all that is beautiful; snatches him from all that is base, and leaves him more than delighted,—ennobled and instructed, under the sense of having not only beheld a new scene, but of having held communion with a new mind, and having been endowed for a time with the keen perception and the impetuous emotion of a nobler and more penetrating intelligence.

§ 2. They induce a different choice of material subjects.

Each of these different aims of art will necessitate a different system of choice of objects to be represented. The first does not indeed imply choice at all, but it is usually united with the selection of such objects as may be naturally and constantly pleasing to all men, at all times; and this selection, when perfect and careful, leads to the attainment of the pure ideal. But the artist aiming at the second end, selects his objects for their meaning and character, rather than for their beauty; and uses them rather to throw light upon the particular thought he wishes to convey, than as in themselves objects of unconnected admiration.

§ 3. The first mode of selection apt to produce sameness and repetition.

Now, although the first mode of selection, when guided by deep reflection, may rise to the production of works possessing a noble and ceaseless influence on the human mind, it is likely to degenerate into, or rather, in nine cases out of ten, it never goes beyond, a mere appeal to such parts of our animal nature as are constant and common—shared by all, and perpetual in all; such, for instance, as the pleasure of the eye in the opposition of a cold and warm color, or of a massy form with a delicate one. It also tends to induce constant repetition of the same ideas, and reference to the same principles; it gives rise to those *rules* of art which properly excited Reynolds's indignation when applied to its higher efforts; it is the source of, and the apology for, that host of technicalities and absurdities which in all ages have been the curse of art and the crown of the connoisseur.

§ 4. The second necessitating variety.

But art, in its second and highest aim, is not an appeal to constant animal feelings, but an expression and awakening of individual thought: it is therefore as various and as extended in its efforts as the compass and grasp of the directing mind; and we feel, in each of its results, that we are looking, not at a specimen of a tradesman's wares, of which he is ready to make us a dozen to match, but at one coruscation of a perpetually active mind, like which there has not been, and will not be another.

§ 5. Yet the first is delightful to all.

Hence, although there can be no doubt which of these branches of art is the highest, it is equally evident that the first will be the most generally felt and appreciated. For the simple statement of the truths of nature must in itself be pleasing to every order of mind; because every truth of nature is more or less beautiful; and if there be just and right selection of the more important of these truths—based, as above explained, on feelings and desires common to all mankind—the facts so selected must, in some degree, be delightful to all, and their value appreciable by all: more or less, indeed, as their senses and instinct have been rendered more or less acute and accurate by use and study; but in some degree by all, and in the same way by all.

§ 6. The second only to a few.

But the highest art, being based on sensations of peculiar minds, sensations occurring to *them* only at particular times, and to a plurality of mankind perhaps never, and being expressive of thoughts which could only rise out of a mass of the most extended knowledge, and of dispositions modified in a thousand ways by peculiarity of intellect—can only be met and understood by persons having some sort of sympathy with the high and solitary minds which produced it—sympathy only to be felt by minds in some degree high and solitary themselves. He alone can appreciate the art, who could comprehend the conversation of the painter, and share in his emotion, in moments of his most fiery passion and most original thought. And whereas the true meaning and end of his art must thus be sealed to thousands, or misunderstood by them ; so also, as he is sometimes obliged, in working out his own peculiar end, to set at defiance those constant laws which have arisen out of our lower and changeless desires, that whose purpose is unseen, is frequently in its means and parts displeasing.

§ 7. The first necessary to the second.

But this want of extended influence in high art, be it especially observed, proceeds from no want of truth in the art itself, but from a want of sympathy in the spectator with those feelings in the artist which prompt him to the utterance of one truth rather than of another. For (and this is what I wish at present especially to insist upon) although it is possible to reach what I have stated to be the first end of art, the representation of facts, without reaching the second, the representation of thoughts, yet it is altogether impossible to reach the second without having previously reached the first. I do not say that a man cannot think, having false basis and material for thought ; but that a false thought is worse than the want of thought, and therefore is not art. And this is the reason why, though I consider the second as the real and only important end of all art, I call the representation of facts the first end ; because it is necessary to the other, and must be attained before it. It is the foundation of all art ; like real foundations it may be little thought of when a brilliant fabric is raised on it ; but it must be there : and as few buildings are beautiful unless every line and column of their mass have reference to their foundation, and are suggestive of its existence and strength, so nothing can be beautiful in art which does not in all its parts suggest and guide to the foundation, even where no undecorated portion of it is visible ; while the noblest edifices of art are built of such pure and fine crystal that the foundation may all be seen through them ; and then many, while they do not see what is built upon that first story, yet much admire the solidity of its brickwork ; thinking they understand all that is to be understood of the matter ; while others stand beside them, looking not at the low story, but up into the heaven at that building of crystal in which the builder's spirit is dwelling. And thus, though we want the thoughts and feelings of the artist as well as the truth, yet they must be thoughts arising out of the knowledge of truth, and feelings raising out of the contemplation of truth. We do not want his mind to be as badly blown glass, that distorts what we see through it; but like a glass of sweet and strange color, that gives new tones to what we see through it; and a glass of rare strength and clearness too, to let us see more than we could ourselves, and bring nature up to us and near to us. Nothing can atone for the want of truth, not the most brilliant imagination, the most playful fancy, the most pure feeling, (supposing that feeling *could* be pure and false at the same time;) not the most exalted conception, nor the most comprehensive grasp of intellect, can make amends for the want of truth, and that for two reasons; first, because falsehood is in itself revolting and degrading; and secondly, because nature is so immeasurably superior to all that the human mind can conceive, that every departure from her is a fall beneath her, so that there can be no such thing as an ornamental falsehood. All falsehood must be a blot as well as a sin, an injury as well as a deception.

§ 8. The exceeding importance of truth.

§ 9. Coldness or want of beauty no sign of truth.

We shall, in consequence, find that no artist can be graceful, imaginative, or original, unless he be truthful; and that the pursuit of beauty, instead of leading us away from truth, increases the desire for it and the necessity of it tenfold; so that those artists who are really great in imaginative power, will be found to have based their boldness of conception on a mass of knowledge far exceeding that possessed by those who pride themselves on its accumulation without regarding its use. Coldness and want of passion in a picture, are not signs of the accuracy, but of the paucity of its statements; true vigor and brilliancy are not signs of audacity, but of knowledge.

§ 10. How truth may be considered a just criterion of all art.

Hence it follows that it is in the power of all, with care and time, to form something like a just judgment of the relative merits of artists; for although with respect to the feeling and passion of pictures, it is often as impossible to criticise as to appreciate, except to such as are in some degree equal in powers of mind, and in some respects the same in modes of mind, with those whose works they judge ; yet, with respect to the representation of facts, it is possible for all, by attention, to form a right judgment of the respective powers and attainments of every artist. Truth is a bar of comparison at which they may all be examined, and according to the rank they take in this examination, will almost invariably be that which, if capable of appreciating them in every respect, we should be just in assigning them ; so strict is the connection, so constant the relation between the sum of knowledge and the extent of thought, between accuracy of perception and vividness of idea.

I shall endeavor, therefore, in the present portion of the work, to enter with care and impartiality into the investigation of the claims of the schools of ancient and modern landscape to faithfulness in representing nature. I shall pay no regard whatsoever to what may be thought beautiful, or sublime, or imaginative. I shall look only for truth ; bare, clear, downright statement of facts ; showing in each particular, as far as I am able, what the truth of nature is, and then seeking for the plain expression of it, and for that alone. And I shall thus endeavor, totally regardless of fervor of imagination or brilliancy of effect, or any other of their more captivating qualities, to examine and to judge the works of the great living painter, who is, I believe, imagined by the majority of the public to paint more falsehood and less fact than any other known master. We shall see with what reason.

CHAPTER II.

THAT THE TRUTH OF NATURE IS NOT TO BE DISCERNED BY THE UNEDUCATED SENSES.

It may be here inquired by the reader, with much appearance of reason, why I think it necessary to devote a separate portion of the work to the showing of what is truthful in art. "Cannot we," say the public, "see what nature is with our own eyes, and find out for ourselves what is like her?" It will be as well to determine this question before we go farther, because if this were possible, there would be little need of criticism or teaching with respect to art.

§ 1. The common self-deception of men with respect to their power of discerning truth.

Now I have just said that it is possible for all men, by care and attention, to form a just judgment of the fidelity of artists to nature. To do this, no peculiar powers of mind are required, no sympathy with particular feelings, nothing which every man of ordinary intellect does not in some degree possess,—powers, namely, of observation and intelligence, which by cultivation may be brought to a high degree of perfection and acuteness. But until this cultivation has been bestowed, and until the instrument thereby perfected has been employed in a consistent series of careful observation, it is as absurd as it is audacious to pretend to form any judgment whatsoever respecting the truth of art: and my first business, before going a step farther, must be to combat the nearly universal error of belief among the thoughtless and unreflecting, that they know either what nature is, or what is like her, that they can discover truth by instinct, and that their minds are such pure Venice glass as to be shocked by all treachery. I have to prove to them that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy, and that the truth of nature is a part of the truth of God; to him who does not search it out, darkness, as it is to him who does, infinity.

The first great mistake that people make in the matter, is the supposition that they must *see* a thing if it be before their eyes. They forget the great truth told them by Locke, Book ii. chap. 9, § 3:—"This is certain, that whatever alterations are made in the body, if they reach not the mind, whatever impressions are made on the outward parts, if they are not taken notice of within, there is no perception. Fire may burn our bodies, with no other effect than it does a billet,

§ 2. Men usually see little of what is before their eyes.

unless the motion be continued to the brain, and there the sense of heat or idea of pain be produced in the mind, wherein consists actual perception. How often may a man observe in himself, that while his mind is intently employed in the contemplation of some subjects and curiously surveying some ideas that are there, it takes no notice of impressions of sounding bodies, made upon the organ of hearing, with the same attention that uses to be for the producing the ideas of sound! A sufficient impulse there may be on the organ, but it not reaching the observation of the mind, there follows no perception, and though the motion that uses to produce the idea of sound be made in the ear, yet no sound is heard." And what is here said, which all must feel by their own experience to be true, is more remarkably and necessarily the case with sight than with any other of the senses, for this reason, that the ear is not accustomed to exercise constantly its functions of hearing; it is accustomed to stillness, and the occurrence of a sound of any kind whatsoever is apt to awake attention, and be followed with perception, in proportion to the degree of sound; but the eye, during our waking hours, exercises constantly its function of seeing; it is its constant habit; we always, as far as the *bodily* organ is concerned, see something, and we always see in the same degree, so that the occurrence of sight, as such, to the eye, is only the continuance of its necessary state of action, and awakes no attention whatsoever, except by the particular nature and quality of the sight. And thus, unless the minds of men are particularly directed to the impressions of sight, objects pass perpetually before the eyes without conveying any impression to the brain at all; and so pass actually unseen, not merely unnoticed, but in the full, clear sense of the word, unseen. And numbers of men being preoccupied with business or care of some description, totally unconnected with the impressions of sight, such is actually the case with them, they receiving from nature only the inevitable sensations of blueness, redness, darkness, light, etc., and except at particular and rare moments, no more whatsoever.

The degree of ignorance of external nature in which men may thus remain, depends, therefore, partly on the number and character of the subjects with which their minds may be otherwise occupied, and partly on a natural want of sensibility to the power of beauty of form, and the other attributes of external objects. I do not think that there is ever such absolute incapacity in the eye for distinguishing and receiving pleasure from certain forms and colors, as there is in persons who are technically said to have no ear, for distinguishing notes, but there is naturally every degree of bluntness and acuteness, both for perceiving the truth of form, and for receiving pleasure from it when perceived. And although I believe even the lowest degree of these faculties can be expanded almost unlimitedly by cultivation, the pleasure received rewards not the labor necessary, and the pursuit is abandoned. So that while in those whose sensations are naturally acute and vivid, the call of external nature is so strong that it must be obeyed, and is ever heard louder as the approach to her is nearer,—in those whose sensations are naturally blunt, the call is overpowered at once by other thoughts, and their faculties of perception, weak originally, die of disuse. With this kind of bodily sensibility to color and form is intimately connected that higher sensibility which we revere as one of the chief attributes of all noble minds, and as the chief spring of real poetry. I believe this kind of sensibility may be entirely resolved into the acuteness of bodily sense of which I have been speaking, associated with love, love I mean in its infinite and holy functions, as it embraces divine and human and brutal intelligences, and hallows the physical perception of external objects by association, gratitude, veneration, and other pure feelings of our moral nature. And although the discovery of truth is in itself altogether intellectual, and dependent merely on our powers of physical perception and abstract intellect, wholly independent of our moral nature, yet these instruments (perception and judgment) are so sharpened and

§ 3. But more or less in proportion to their natural sensibility to what is beautiful.

§ 4. Connected with a perfect state of moral feeling.

brightened, and so far more swiftly and effectively used, when they have the energy and passion of our moral nature to bring them into action—perception is so quickened by love, and judgment so tempered by veneration, that, practically, a man of deadened moral sensation is always dull in his perception of truth, and thousands of the highest and most divine truths of nature are wholly concealed from him, however constant and indefatigable may be his intellectual search. Thus, then, the farther we look, the more we are limited in the number of those to whom we should choose to appeal as judges of truth, and the more we perceive how great a number of mankind may be partially incapacitated from either discovering or feeling it.

§ 5. And of the intellectual powers.

Next to sensibility, which is necessary for the perception of facts, come reflection and memory, which are necessary for the retention of them, and recognition of their resemblances. For a man may receive impression after impression, and that vividly and with delight, and yet, if he take no care to reason upon those impresions and trace them to their sources, he may remain totally ignorant of the facts that produced them; nay, may attribute them to facts with which they have no connection, or may coin causes for them that have no existence at all. And the more sensibility and imagination a man possesses, the more likely will he be to fall into error; for then he will see whatever he expects, and admire and judge with his heart, and not with his eyes. How many people are misled, by what has been said and sung of the serenity of Italian skies, to suppose they must be more *blue* than the skies of the north, and think that they see them so; whereas, the sky of Italy is far more dull and gray in color than the skies of the north, and is distinguished only by its intense repose of light. And this is confirmed by Benvenuto Cellini, who, I remember, on his first entering France, is especially struck with the clearness of the sky, as contrasted with the *mist* of Italy. And what is more strange still, when people see in a painting what they suppose to have been the source of their impressions, they will affirm it to be truthful, though they feel no such impression resulting from it. Thus, though day after day they may have been impressed by the tone and warmth of an Italian sky, yet not having traced the feeling to its source, and supposing themselves impressed by its *blueness*, they will affirm a blue sky in a painting to be truthful, and reject the most faithful rendering of all the real attributes of Italy as cold or dull.

§ 6. How sight depends upon previous knowledge.

And this influence of the imagination over the senses, is peculiarly observable in the perpetual disposition of mankind to suppose that they *see* what they *know*, and *vice versa* in their not seeing what they do not know. Thus, if a child be asked to draw the corner of a house, he will lay down something in the form of the letter T. He has no conception that the two lines of the roof, which he knows to be level, produce on his eye the impression of a slope. It requires repeated and close attention before he detects this fact, or can be made to feel that the lines on his paper are false. And the Chinese, children in all things, suppose a good perspective drawing to be as false as we feel their plate patterns to be, or wonder at the strange buildings which come to a point at the end. And all the early works, whether of nations or of men, show, by their want of *shade*, how little the eye, without knowledge, is to be depended upon to discover truth. The eye of a Red Indian, keen enough to find the trace of his enemy or his prey, even in the unnatural turn of a trodden leaf, is yet so blunt to the impressions of shade, that Mr. Catlin mentions his once having been in great danger from having painted a portrait with the face in half-light, which the untutored observers imagined and affirmed to be the painting of half a face. Barry, in his sixth lecture, takes notice of the same want of actual *sight* in the early painters of Italy. "The imitations," he says, "of early art are like those of children --nothing is seen in the spectacle before us, unless it be previously known and sought for; and numberless observable differences between the age of ignorance and that of knowledge, show how much the contraction or extension of our sphere of vision depends upon other considerations than the mere returns of our natural optics." And the deception which takes place so broadly in cases like these, has infinitely greater influence over our judgment of the more intricate and less tangible truths of nature. We are constantly supposing that we see what experience only has shown us, or can show us, to have existence, constantly missing the sight of what we do not know beforehand to be visible : and painters, to the last hour of their lives, are apt to fall in some degree into the error of painting what exists, rather than what they can see. I shall prove the extent of this error more completely hereafter.

§7. The difficulty increased by the variety of truths in nature.

Be it also observed, that all these difficulties would lie in the way, even if the truths of nature were always the same, constantly repeated and brought before us. But the truths of nature are one eternal change—one infinite variety. There is no bush on the face of the globe exactly like another bush ;—there are no two trees in the forest whose boughs bend into the same network, nor two leaves on the same tree which could not be told one from the other, nor two waves in the sea exactly alike. And out of this mass of various, yet agreeing beauty, it is by long attention only that the conception of the constant character—the ideal form—hinted at by all, yet assumed by none, is fixed upon the imagination for its standard of truth.

It is not singular, therefore, nor in any way disgraceful, that the majority of spectators are totally incapable of appreciating the truth of nature, when fully set before them ; but it is both singular and disgraceful that it is so difficult to convince them of their own incapability. Ask the connoisseur, who has scampered over all Europe, the shape of the leaf of an elm, and the chances are ninety to one that he cannot tell you ; and yet he will be voluble of criticism on every painted landscape from Dresden to Madrid, and pretend to tell you whether they are like nature or not. Ask an enthusiastic chatterer in the Sistine Chapel how many ribs he has, and you get no answer ; but it is odds that you do not get out of the door without his informing you that he considers such and such a figure badly drawn !

A few such interrogations as these might indeed convict, if not convince the mass of spectators of incapability, were it not for the universal reply, that they can recognize what they cannot describe, and feel what is truthful, though they do not know what is truth. And this is, to a certain degree, true: a man may recognize the portrait of his friend, though he cannot, if you ask him apart, tell you the shape of his nose or the height of his forehead; and every one could tell nature herself from an imitation; why not then, it will be asked, what is like her from what is not? For this simple reason, that we constantly recognize things by their least important attributes, and by help of very few of those, and if these attributes exist not in the imitation, though there may be thousands of others far higher and more valuable, yet if those be wanting, or imperfectly rendered, by which we are accustomed to recognize the object, we deny the likeness; while if these be given, though all the great and valuable and important attributes may be wanting, we affirm the likeness. Recognition is no proof of real and intrinsic resemblance. We recognize our books by their bindings, though the true and essential characteristics lie inside. A man is known to his dog by the smell—to his tailor by the coat—to his friend by the smile: each of these know him, but how little, or how much, depends on the dignity of the intelligence. That which is truly and indeed characteristic of the man, is known only to God. One portrait of a man may possess exact accuracy of feature, and no atom of expression; it may be, to use the ordinary terms of admiration bestowed on such portraits by those whom they please, "as like as it can stare." Everybody, down to his cat, would know this. Another portrait may have neglected or misrepresented the features, but may have given the flash of the eye, and the peculiar radiance of the lip, seen on him only in his hours of highest mental excitement. None but his friends would know this. Another may have given none of his ordinary expressions, but one which he wore in the most excited instant of his life, when all his secret passions

§ 8. We recognize objects by their least important attributes. Compare Part I., Sect. I., Chap. 4.

and all his highest powers were brought into play at once. None but those who had then seen him might recognize *this* as like. But which would be the most truthful portrait of the *man?* The first gives the accidents of body—the sport of climate, and food, and time—which corruption inhabits, and the worm waits for. The second gives the stamp of the soul upon the flesh ; but it is the soul seen in the emotions which it shares with many—which may not be characteristic of its essence—the results of habit, and education, and accident—a gloze, whether purposely worn or unconsciously assumed, perhaps totally contrary to all that is rooted and real in the mind that it conceals. The third has caught the trace of all that was most hidden and most mighty, when all hypocrisy, and all habit, and all petty and passing emotion—the ice, and the bank, and the foam of the immortal river—were shivered, and broken, and swallowed up in the awakening of its inward strength ; when the call and claim of some divine motive had brought into visible being those latent forces and feelings which the spirit's own volition could not summon, nor its consciousness comprehend ; which God only knew, and God only could awaken, the depth and the mystery of its peculiar and separating attributes. And so it is with external Nature : she has a body and a soul like man ; but her soul is the Deity. It is possible to represent the body without the spirit ; and this shall be like to those whose senses are only cognizant of body. It is possible to represent the spirit in its ordinary and inferior manifestations ; and this shall be like to those who have not watched for its moments of power. It is possible to represent the spirit in its secret and high operations ; and this shall be like only to those to whose watching they have been revealed. All these are truth ; but according to the dignity of the truths he can represent or feel, is the power of the painter,—the justice of the judge.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:—FIRST, THAT PARTICULAR TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN GENERAL ONES.

§ 1. Necessity of determining the relative importance of truths.

I HAVE in the last chapter affirmed that we usually recognize objects by their least essential characteristics. This very naturally excites the inquiry what I consider their important characteristics, and why I call one truth more important than another. And this question must be immediately determined, because it is evident, that in judging of the truth of painters, we shall have to consider not only the accuracy with which individual truths are given, but the relative importance of the truths themselves; for as it constantly happens that the powers of art are unable to render *all* truths, that artist must be considered the most truthful who has preserved the most important at the expense of the most trifling.

§ 2. Misapplication of the aphorism: "General truths are more important than particular ones."

Now if we are to begin our investigation in Aristotle's way, and look at the *φαινόμενα* of the subject, we shall immediately stumble over a maxim which is in everybody's mouth, and which, as it is understood in practice, is true and useful, as it is usually applied in argument, false and misleading. "General truths are more important than particular ones." Often, when in conversation, I have been praising Turner for his perpetual variety, and for giving so particular and separate a character to each of his compositions, that the mind of the painter can only be estimated by seeing all that he has ever done, and that nothing can be prophesied of a picture coming into existence on his easel, but that it will be totally different in idea from all that he has ever done before; and when I have opposed this inexhaustible knowledge or imagination, whichever it may be, to the perpetual repetition of some half-dozen conceptions by Claude and Poussin, I have been met by the formidable objection, enunciated with much dignity and self-satisfaction on the part of my antagonist—"That is not painting general truths, that is painting particular truths." Now there must be something wrong in that application of a principle which would make the variety and abundance which we look for as the greatest sign of intellect in the writer, the greatest sign of error in the painter; and we shall accordingly see, by an application of it to other matters, that, taken without limitation, the whole proposition is utterly false. For instance, Mrs. Jameson somewhere mentions the exclamation of a lady of her acquaintance, more desirous to fill a pause in conversation than abundant in sources of observation: "What an excellent book the Bible is!" This was a very general truth indeed, a truth predicable of the Bible in common with many other books, but it certainly is neither striking nor important. Had the lady exclaimed—"How evidently is the Bible a divine revelation!" she would have expressed a particular truth, one predicable of the Bible only; but certainly far more interesting and important. Had she, on the contrary, informed us that the Bible was a book, she would have been still more general, and still less entertaining. If I ask any one who somebody else is, and receive for answer that he is a man, I get little satisfaction for my pains; but if I am told that he is Sir Isaac Newton, I immediately thank my neighbor for his information. The fact is, and the above instances may serve at once to prove it if it be not self-evident, that generality gives importance to the *subject*, and limitation or particularity to the *predicate*. If I say that such and such a man in China is an opium-eater, I say nothing very interesting, because my subject (such a man) is particular. If I say that all men in China are opium-eaters, I say something interesting, because my subject (all men) is general. If I say that all men in China eat, I say nothing interesting, because my predicate (eat) is general. If I say that all men in China eat opium, I say

§ 3. Falseness of this maxim taken without explanation.

§ 4. Generality important in the subject, particularity in the predicate.

something interesting, because my predicate (eat opium) is particular.

Now almost everything which (with reference to a given subject) a painter has to ask himself whether he shall represent or not, is a predicate. Hence in art, particular truths are usually more important than general ones.

How is it then that anything so plain as this should be contradicted by one of the most universally received aphorisms respecting art? A little reflection will show us under what limitations this maxim may be true in practice.

§ 5. The importance of truths of species is not owing to their generality.

It is self-evident that when we are painting or describing anything, those truths must be the most important which are most characteristic of what is to be told or represented. Now that which is first and most broadly characteristic of a thing, is that which distinguishes its genus, or which makes it what it is. For instance, that which makes drapery *be* drapery, is not its being made of silk or worsted or flax, for things are made of all these which are not drapery, but the ideas peculiar to drapery; the properties which, when inherent in a thing, make it drapery, are extension, non-elastic flexibility, unity and comparative thinness. Everything which has these properties, a waterfall, for instance, if united and extended, or a net of weeds over a wall, is drapery, as much as silk or woollen stuff is. So that these ideas separate drapery in our minds from everything else; they are peculiarly characteristic of it, and therefore are the most important group of ideas connected with it; and so with everything else, that which makes the thing what it is, is the most important idea, or group of ideas connected with the thing. But as this idea must necessarily be common to all individuals of the species it belongs to, it is a general idea with respect to that species; while other ideas, which are not characteristic of the species, and are therefore in reality general, (as black or white are terms applicable to more things than drapery,) are yet particular with respect to that species, being predicable only of certain individuals of it. Hence it is carelessly and fasely said, that general ideas are more important than particular ones; carelessly and falsely, I say, because the so-called general idea is important, not because it is common to all the individuals of that species, but because it separates that species from everything else. It is the distinctiveness, not the universality of the truth, which renders it important. And the so-called particular idea is unimportant, not because it is not predicable of the whole species, but because it *is* predicable of things out of that species. It is not its individuality, but its generality which renders it unimportant. So, then, truths are important just in proportion as they are characteristic, and are valuable, primarily, as they separate the species from all other created things secondarily, as they separate the individuals of that species from one another: thus "silken" or "woollen" are unimportant ideas with respect to drapery, because they neither separate the species from other things, nor even the individuals of that species from one another, since, though not common to the whole of it, they are common to indefinite numbers of it; but the particular folds into which any piece of drapery may happen to fall, being different in many particulars from those into which any other piece of drapery will fall, are expressive not only of the characters of the species, flexibility (non-elasticity, etc.,) but of individuality and definite character in the case immediately observed, and are consequently most important and necessary ideas. So in a man, to be short-legged or long-nosed, or anything else of accidental quality, does not distinguish him from other short-legged or long-nosed animals; but the important truths respecting a man are, first, the marked development of that distinctive organization which separates him as man from other animals, and secondly, that group of qualities which distinguish the individual from all other men, which make him Paul or Judas, Newton or Shakspeare.

§ 6. All truths valuable as they are characteristic.

§ 7. Otherwise truths of species are valuable, because beautiful.

Such are the real sources of importance in truths as far as they are considered with reference merely to their being general, or particular; but there are other sources of importance which give farther weight to the ordinary opinion of the greater value of those which are general, and which render this opinion right in practice ; I mean the intrinsic beauty of the truths themselves, a quality which it is not here the place to investigate, but which must just be noticed, as invariably adding value to truths of species rather than to those of individuality. The qualities and properties which characterize man or any other animal as a species, are the perfection of his or its form of mind, almost all individual differences arising from imperfections ; hence a truth of species is the more valuable to art, because it must always be a beauty, while a truth of individuals is commonly, in some sort or way, a defect.

§ 8. And many truths, valuable if separate, may be objectionable in connection with others.

Again, a truth which may be of great interest, when an object is viewed by itself, may be objectionable when it is viewed in relation to other objects. Thus if we were painting a piece of drapery as our whole subject, it would be proper to give in it every source of entertainment, which particular truths could supply, to give it varied color and delicate texture ; but if we paint this same piece of drapery, as part of the dress of a Madonna, all these ideas of richness or texture become thoroughly contemptible, and unfit to occupy the mind at the same moment with the idea of the Virgin. The conception of drapery is then to be suggested by the simplest and slightest means possible, and all notions of texture and detail are to be rejected with utter reprobation ; but this, observe, is not because they are particular or general or anything else, with respect to the drapery itself, but because they draw the attention to the dress instead of the saint, and disturb and degrade the imagination and the feelings ; hence we ought to give the conception of the drapery in the most unobtrusive way possible, by rendering those essential qualities distinctly, which are necessary to the very existence of drapery, and not one more.

With these last two sources of the importance of truths, we have nothing to do at present, as they are dependent upon ideas of beauty and relation : I merely allude to them now, to show that all that is alleged by Sir J. Reynolds and other scientific writers respecting the kind of truths proper to be represented by the painter or sculptor is perfectly just and right; while yet the principle on which they base their selection (that general truths are more important than particular ones) is altogether false. Canova's Perseus in the Vatican is entirely spoiled by an unlucky *tassel* in the folds of the mantle (which the next admirer of Canova who passes would do well to knock off;) but it is spoiled not because this is a particular truth, but because it is a contemptible, unnecessary, and ugly truth. The button which fastens the vest of the Sistine Daniel is as much a particular truth as this, but it is a necessary one, and the idea of it is given by the simplest possible means; hence it is right and beautiful.

§ 9. Recapitulation.

Finally, then, it is to be remembered that all truths as far as their being particular or general affects their value at all, are valuable in proportion as they are particular, and valueless in proportion as they are general; or to express the proposition in simpler terms, every truth is valuable in proportion as it is characteristic of the thing of which it is affirmed.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:—SECONDLY, THAT RARE TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FREQUENT ONES.

§ 1. No accidental violation of nature's principles should be represented.

It will be necessary next for us to determine how far frequency or rarity can affect the importance of truths, and whether the artist is to be considered the most truthful who paints what is common or what is unusual in nature.

Now the whole determination of this question depends upon whether the unusual fact be a violation of nature's general principles, or the application of some of those principles in a peculiar and striking way. Nature sometimes, though very rarely, violates her own principles ; it is her principle to make everything beautiful, but now and then, for an instant, she permits what, compared with the rest of her works, might be called ugly ; it is true that even these rare blemishes are permitted, as I have above said, for a good purpose, (Part I. Sec. I. Chap. 5,) they are valuable in nature, and used as she uses them, are equally valuable (as instantaneous discords) in art ; but the artist who should seek after these exclusively, and paint nothing else, though he might be able to point to something in nature as the original of every one of his uglinesses, would yet be, in the strict sense of the word, false,—false to nature, and disobedient to her laws. For instance, it is the practice of nature to give character to the outlines of her clouds, by perpetual angles and right lines. Perhaps once in a month, by diligent watching, we might be able to see a cloud altogether rounded and made up of curves ; but the artist who paints nothing but curved clouds must yet be considered thoroughly and inexcusably false.

§ 2. But the cases in which those principles have been strikingly exemplified.

But the case is widely different, when instead of a principle violated, we have one extraordinarily carried out or manifested under unusual circumstances. Though nature is constantly beautiful, she does not exhibit her highest powers of beauty constantly, for then they would satiate us and pall upon our senses. It is necessary to their appreciation that they should be rarely shown. Her finest touches are things which must be watched for ; her most perfect passages of beauty are the most evanescent. She is constantly doing something beautiful for us, but it is something which she has not done before and will not do again ; some exhibition of her general powers in particular circumstances which, if we do not catch at the instant it is passing, will not be repeated for us. Now they are these evanescent passages of perfected beauty, these perpetually varied examples of utmost power, which the artist ought to seek for and arrest. No supposition can be more absurd than that effects or truths frequently exhibited are more characteristic of

§ 3. Which are comparatively rare.

nature than those which are equally necessary by her laws, though rarer in occurrence. Both the frequent and the rare are parts of the same great system; to give either exclusively is imperfect truth, and to repeat the same effect or thought in two pictures is wasted life. What should we think of a poet who should keep all his life repeating the same thought in different words? and why should we be more lenient to the parrot-painter who has learned one lesson from the page of nature, and keeps stammering it out with eternal repetition without turning the leaf? Is it less tautology to describe a thing over and over again with lines, than it is with words? The teaching of nature is as varied and infinite as it is constant; and the duty of the painter is to watch for every one of her lessons, and to give (for human life will admit of nothing more) those in which she has manifested each of her principles in the most peculiar and striking way. The deeper his research and the rarer the phenomena he has noted, the more valuable will his works be; to repeat himself, even in a single instance, is treachery to nature, for a thousand human lives would not be enough to give one instance of the perfect manifestation of each of her powers; and as for combining or classifying them, as well might a preacher expect in one sermon to express and explain every divine truth which can be gathered out of God's revelation, as a painter expect in one composition to express and illustrate every lesson which can be received from God's creation. Both are commentators on infinity, and the duty of both is to take for each discourse one essential truth, seeking particularly and insisting especially on those which are less palpable to ordinary observation, and more likely to escape an indolent research; and to impress that, and that alone, upon those whom they address, with every illustration that can be furnished by their knowledge, and every adornment attainable by their power. And the real truthfulness of the painter is in proportion to the number and variety of the facts he has so illustrated; those facts being always, as above observed, the realization, not the violation of a general principle. The quantity of

§ 4. All repetition is blamable.

§ 5. The duty of the painter is the same as that of a preacher.

truth is in proportion to the number of such facts, and its value and instructiveness in proportion to their rarity. All really great pictures, therefore, exhibit the general habits of nature, manifested in some peculiar, rare, and beautiful way.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:—THIRDLY, THAT TRUTHS OF COLOR ARE THE LEAST IMPORTANT OF ALL TRUTHS.

§ 1. Difference between primary and secondary qualities in bodies.

In the two last chapters, we have pointed out general tests of the importance of all truths, which will be sufficient at once to distinguish certain classes of properties in bodies, as more necessary to be told than others, because more characteristic, either of the particular thing to be represented, or of the principles of nature.

According to Locke, Book ii. chap. 8, there are three sorts of qualities in bodies: first, the "bulk, figure, number, situation, and motion or rest of their solid parts: those that are in them, whether we perceive them or not." These he calls primary qualities. Secondly, "the power that is in any body to operate after a peculiar manner on any of our senses," (sensible qualities.) And thirdly, "the power that is any body to make such a change in another body as that it shall operate on our senses differently from what it did before: these last being usually called *powers*."

§ 2. The first are fully characteristic, the second imperfectly so.

Hence he proceeds to prove that those which he calls primary qualities are indeed part of the essence of the body, and characteristic of it; but that the two other kinds of qualities which together he calls secondary, are neither of them more than *powers* of producing on other objects, or in us, certain effects and sensations. Now a power of influence is always equally characteristic of two objects—the active and passive; for it is as much necessary that there should be a power in the object suffering to receive the impression, as in the object acting to give the impression. (Compare Locke, Book ii. chap. 21, sect. 2.) For supposing two people, as is frequently the case, perceive different scents in the same flower, it is evident that the power in the flower to give this or that depends on the nature of their nerves, as well as on that of its own particles; and that we are as correct in saying it is a power in us to perceive, as in the object to impress. Every power, therefore, being characteristic of the nature of two bodies, is imperfectly and incompletely characteristic of either separately; but the primary qualities, being characteristic only of the body in which they are inherent, are the most important truths connected with it. For the question, what the thing *is*, must precede, and be of more importance than the question, what can it do.

§ 3. Color is a secondary quality, therefore less important than form.

Now, by Locke's definition above given, only bulk, figure, situation, and motion or rest of solid parts, are primary qualities. Hence all truths of color sink at once into the second rank. He, therefore, who has neglected a truth of form for a truth of color, has neglected a greater truth for a less one.

And that color is indeed a most unimportant characteristic of objects, will be farther evident on the slightest consideration. The color of plants is constantly changing with the season, and of everything with the quality of light falling on it; but the nature and essence of the thing are independent of these changes. An oak is an oak, whether green with spring or red with winter; a dahlia is a dahlia, whether it be yellow or crimson; and if some monster-hunting botanist should ever frighten the flower blue, still it will be a dahlia; but let one curve of the petals—one groove of the stamens be wanting, and the flower ceases to be the same. Let the roughness of the bark and the angles of the boughs be smoothed or diminished, and the oak ceases to be an oak; but let it retain its inward structure and outward form, and though its leaves grew white, or pink, or blue, or tri-color, it would be a white oak, or a pink oak, or a republican oak, but an oak still. Again, color is hardly ever even a *possible* distinction between two objects of the same species. Two trees, of the same kind, at the same season, and of the same age, are of absolutely the same color; but they are not of the same form, nor anything like it. There can be no difference in the color of two pieces of rock broken from the same place; but it is impossible they should be of the same form. So that form is not only the chief characteristic of species, but the only characteristic of individuals of a species.

§ 4. Color no distinction between objects of the same species.

§ 5. And different in association from what it is alone.

Again, a color, in association with other colors, is different from the same color seen by itself. It has a distinct and peculiar power upon the retina dependent on its association. Consequently, the color of any object is not more dependent upon the nature of the object itself, and the eye beholding it, than on the color of the objects near it; in this respect also, there fore, it is no characteristic.

§ 6. It is not certain whether any two people see the same colors in things.

And so great is the uncertainty with respect to those qualities or powers which depend as much on the nature of the object suffering as of the object acting, that it is totally impossible to prove that one man sees in the same thing the same color that another does though he may use the same name for it. One man may see yellow where another sees blue, but as the effect is constant, they agree in the term to be used for it, and both call it blue, or both yellow, having yet totally different ideas attached to the term. And yet neither can be said to see falsely, because the color is not in the thing, but in the thing and them together. But if they see forms differently, one must see falsely, because the form is positive in the object. My friend may see boars blue for anything I know, but it is impossible he should see them with paws instead of hoofs, unless his eyes or brain are diseased. (Compare Locke, Book ii. chap. xxxii. § 15.) But I do not speak of this uncertainty as capable of having any effect on art, because, though perhaps Landseer sees dogs of the color which I should call blue, yet the color he puts on the canvas, being in the same way blue to him, will still be brown or dog-color to me; and so we may argue on points of color just as if all men saw alike, as indeed in all probability they do; but I merely mention this uncertainty to show farther the vagueness and unimportance of color as a characteristic of bodies.

§ 7. Form, considered as an element of landscape, includes light and shade.

§ 8. Importance of light and shade in expressing the character of bodies and unimportance of color.

Before going farther, however, I must explain the sense in which I have used the word "form," because painters have a most inaccurate and careless habit of confining the term to the *outline* of bodies, whereas it necessarily implies light and shade. It is true that the outline and the chiaroscuro must be separate subjects of investigation with the student; but no form whatsoever can be known to the eye in the slightest degree without its chiaroscuro; and, therefore, in speaking of form generally as an element of landscape, I mean that perfect and harmonious unity of outline with light and shade, by which all the parts and projections and proportions of a body are fully explained to the eye, being nevertheless perfectly independent of sight or power in other objects, the presence of light upon a body being a positive existence, whether we are aware of it or not, and in no degree dependent upon our senses. This being understood, the most convincing proof of the unimportance of color lies in the accurate observation of the way in which any material object impresses itself on the mind. If we look at nature carefully, we shall find that her colors are in a state of perpetual confusion and indistinctness, while her forms, as told by light and shade, are invariably clear, distinct, and speaking. The stones and gravel of the bank catch green reflections from the boughs above; the bushes receive grays and yellows from the ground; every hairbreadth of polished surface gives a little bit of the blue of the sky or the gold of the sun, like a star upon the local color; this local color, changeful and uncertain in itself, is again disguised and modified by the hue of the light, or quenched in the gray of the shadow; and the confusion and blending of tint is altogether so great, that were we left to find out what objects were by their colors only, we would scarcely in places distinguish the boughs of a tree from the air beyond them, or the ground beneath them. I know that people unpractised in art will not believe this at first ; but if they have accurate powers of observation, they may soon ascertain it for themselves ; they will find that, while they can scarcely ever determine the *exact* hue of anything, except when it occurs in large masses, as in a green field or the blue sky, the form, as told by light and shade, is always decided and evident, and the source of the chief character of every object. Light and shade indeed so completely conquer the distinctions of local color, that the difference in hue between the illumined parts of a white and black object is not so great as the difference (in sunshine) between the illumined and dark side of either separately.

§ 9. Recapitulation.

We shall see hereafter, in considering ideas of beauty, that color, even as a source of pleasure, is feeble compared to form ; but this we cannot insist upon at present; we have only to do with simple truth, and the observations we have made are sufficient to prove that the artist who sacrifices or forgets a truth of form in the pursuit of a truth of color, sacrifices what is definite to what is uncertain, and what is essential to what is accidental.

CHAPTER VI.

RECAPITULATION.

§ 1. The importance of historical truths.

It ought farther to be observed respecting truths in general, that those are always most valuable which are most historical, that is, which tell us most about the past and future states of the object to which they belong. In a tree, for instance, it is more important to give the appearance of energy and elasticity in the limbs which is indicative of growth and life, than any particular character of leaf, or texture of bough. It is more important that we should feel that the uppermost sprays are creeping higher and higher into the sky, and be impressed with the current of life and motion which is animating every fibre, than that we should know the exact pitch of relief with which those fibres are thrown out against the sky. For the first truths tell us tales about the tree, about what it has been, and will be, while the last are characteristic of it only in its present state, and are in no way talkative about themselves. Talkative facts are always more interesting and more important than silent ones. So again the lines in a crag which mark its stratification, and how it has been washed and rounded by water, or twisted and drawn out in fire, are more important, because they tell more than the stains of the lichens which change year by year, and the accidental fissures of frost or decomposition ; not but that both of these are historical, but historical in a less distinct manner, and for shorter periods.

§ 2. Form, as explained by ight and shade, the first of all ruths. Tone, ight and color are secondary.

Hence in general the truths of specific form are the first and most important of all ; and next to them, those truths of chiaroscuro which are necessary to make us understand every quality and part of forms, and the relative distances of objects among each other, and in consequence their relative bulks. Altogether lower than these, as truths, though often most important as beauties, stand all effects of chiaroscuro which are productive merely of imitations of light and tone, and all effects of color. To make us understand the *space* of the sky, is an end worthy of the artist's highest powers ; to hit its particular blue or gold is an end to be thought of when we have accomplished the first, and not till then.

§ 3. And deceptive chiaroscuro the lowest of all.

Finally, far below all these come those particular accuracies or tricks of chiaroscuro which cause objects to look projecting from the canvas, not worthy of the name of truths, because they require for their attainment the sacrifice of all others ; for not having at our disposal the same intensity of light by which nature illustrates her objects, we are obliged, if we would have perfect deception in one, to destroy its relation to the rest. (Compare Sect. II. chap. V.) And thus he who throws one object out of his picture, never lets the spectator into it. Michael Angelo bids you follow his phantoms into the abyss of heaven, but a modern French painter drops his hero out of the picture frame.

This solidity or projection then, is the very lowest truth that art can give ; it is the painting of mere matter, giving that as food for the eye which is properly only the subject of touch ; it can neither instruct nor exalt, nor please except as jugglery ; it addresses no sense of beauty nor of power ; and wherever it characterizes the general aim of a picture, it is the sign and the evidence of the vilest and lowest mechanism which art can be insulted by giving name to.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING PRINCIPLES.

§ 1. The different selection of facts consequent on the several aims at imitation or at truth.

We have seen, in the preceding chapters, some proof of what was before asserted, that the truths necessary for deceptive imitation are not only few, but of the very lowest order. We thus find painters ranging themselves into two great classes ; one aiming at the development of the exquisite truths of specific form, refined color, and ethereal space, and content with the clear and impressive suggestion of any of these, by whatsoever means obtained ; and the other casting all these aside, to attain those particular truths of tone and chiaroscuro, which may trick the spectator into a belief of reality. The first class, if they have to paint a tree, are intent upon giving the exquisite designs of intersecting undulation in its boughs, the grace of its leafage, the intricacy of its organization, and all those qualities which make it lovely or affecting of its kind. The second endeavor only to make you believe that you are looking at wood. They are totally regardless of truths or beauties of form ; a stump is as good as a trunk for all their purposes, so that they can only deceive the eye into the supposition that it *is* a stump and not canvas.

§ 2. The old masters, as a body, aim only at imitation.

To which of these classes the great body of the old landscape painters belonged, may be partly gathered from the kind of praise which is bestowed upon them by those who admire them most, which either refers to technical matters, dexterity of touch, clever oppositions of color, etc., or is bestowed on the power of the painter to *deceive.* M. de Marmontel, going into a connoisseur's gallery, pretends to mistake a fine Berghem for a window. This, he says, was affirmed by its possessor to be the greatest praise the picture had ever received. Such is indeed the notion of art which is at the bottom of the veneration usually felt for the old landscape painters; it is of course the palpable, first idea of ignorance; it is the only notion which people unacquainted with art can by any possibility have of its ends; the only test by which people unacquainted with nature can pretend to form anything like judgment of art. It is strange that, with the great historical painters of Italy before them, who had broken so boldly and indignantly from the trammels of this notion, and shaken the very dust of it from their feet, the succeeding landscape painters should have wasted their lives in jugglery: but so it is, and so it will be felt, the more we look into their works, that the deception of the senses was the great and first end of all their art. To attain this they paid deep and serious attention to effects of light and tone, and to the exact degree of relief which material objects take against light and atmosphere; and sacrificing every other truth to these, not necessarily, but because they required no others for deception, they succeeded in rendering these particular facts with a fidelity and force which, in the pictures that have come down to us uninjured, are as yet unequalled, and never can be surpassed. They painted their foregrounds with laborious industry, covering them with details so as to render them deceptive to the ordinary eye, regardless of beauty or truth in the details themselves; they painted their trees with careful attention to their pitch

§ 3. What truths they gave.

of shade against the sky, utterly regardless of all that is beautiful or essential in the anatomy of their foliage and boughs : they painted their distances with exquisite use of transparent color and aerial tone, totally neglectful of all facts and forms which nature uses such color and tone to relieve and adorn. They had neither love of nature, nor feeling of her beauty ; they looked for her coldest and most commonplace effects, because they were easiest to imitate ; and for her most vulgar forms, because they were most easily to be recognized by the untaught eyes of those whom alone they could hope to please ; they did it, like the Pharisee of old, to be seen of men, and they had their reward. They do deceive and delight the unpractised eye ; they will to all ages, as long as their colors endure, be the standards of excellence with all, who, ignorant of nature, claim to be thought learned in art. And they will to all ages be, to those who have thorough love and knowledge of the creation which they libel, instructive proofs of the limited number and low character of the truths which are necessary, and the accumulated multitude of pure, broad, bold falsehoods which are admissible in pictures meant only to deceive.

There is of course more or less accuracy of knowledge and execution combined with this aim at effect, according to the industry and precision of eye possessed by the master, and more or less of beauty in the forms selected, according to his natural taste ; but both the beauty and truth are sacrificed unhesitatingly where they interfere with the great effort at deception. Claude had, if it had been cultivated, a fine feeling for beauty of form, and is seldom ungraceful in his foliage ; but his picture, when examined with reference to essential truth, is one mass of error from beginning to end. Cuyp, on the other hand, could paint close truth of everything, except ground and water, with decision and success, but he has no sense of beauty. Gaspar Poussin, more ignorant of truth than Claude, and almost as dead to beauty as Cuyp, has yet a perception of the feeling and moral truth of nature which often redeems the picture ; but yet in all of them, everything that they can do is done for deception, and nothing for the sake or love of what they are painting.

§ 4. The principles of selection adopted by modern artists.

Modern landscape painters have looked at nature with totally different eyes, seeking not for what is easiest to imitate, but for what is most important to tell. Rejecting at once all ideal of *bona fide* imitation, they think only of conveying the impression of nature into the mind of the spectator. And there is, in consequence, a greater sum of valuable, essential, and impressive truth in the works of two or three of our leading modern landscape painters, than in those of all the old masters put together, and of truth too, nearly unmixed with definite or avoidable falsehood ; while the unimportant and feeble truths of the old masters are choked with a mass of perpetual defiance of the most authoritative laws of nature.

§ 5. General feeling of Claude, Salvator, and G. Poussin, contrasted with the freedom and vastness of nature.

I do not expect this assertion to be believed at present ; it must rest for demonstration on the examination we are about to enter upon ; yet, even without reference to any intricate or deep-laid truths, it appears strange to me, that any one familiar with nature, and fond of her, should not grow weary and sick at heart among the melancholy and monotonous transcripts of her which alone can be received from the old school of art. A man accustomed to the broad, wild sea-shore, with its bright breakers, and free winds, and sounding rocks, and eternal sensation of tameless power, can scarcely but be angered when Claude bids him stand still on some paltry, chipped and chiselled quay with porters and wheelbarrows running against him, to watch a weak, rippling bound and barriered water, that has not strength enough in one of its waves to upset the flower-pots on the wall, or even to fling one jet of spray over the confining stone. A man accustomed to the strength and glory of God's mountains, with their soaring and radiant pinnacles, and surging sweeps of measureless distance, kingdoms in their valleys, and climates upon their crests, can scarcely but be angered when Salvator bids him stand still under some contemptible fragment of splintery crag, which an Alpine snow-wreath would smother in its first swell, with a stunted bush or two growing out of it, and a volume of manufactory smoke for a sky. A man accustomed to the grace and infinity of nature's foliage, with every vista a cathedral, and every bough a revelation, can scarcely but be angered when Poussin mocks him with a black round mass of impenetrable paint, diverging into feathers instead of leaves, and supported on a stick instead of a trunk. The fact is, there is one thing wanting in all the doing of these men, and that is the very virtue by which the work of human mind chiefly rises above that of the Daguerreotype or Calotype, or any other mechanical means that ever have been or may be invented, Love : There is no evidence of their ever having gone to nature with any thirst, or received from her such emotion as could make them, even for an instant, lose sight of themselves ; there is in them neither earnestness nor humility ; there is no simple or honest record of any single truth ; none of the plain words nor straight efforts that men speak and make when they once feel.

§ 6. Inadequacy of the landscape of Titian and Tintoret.

Nor is it only by the professed landscape painters that the great verities of the material world are betrayed : Grand as are the motives of landscape in the works of the earlier and mightier men, there is yet in them nothing approaching to a general view nor complete rendering of natural phenomena ; not that they are to be blamed for this ; for they took out of nature that which was fit for their purpose, and their mission was to do no more ; but we must be cautious to distinguish that imaginative abstraction of landscape which alone we find in them, from the entire statement of truth which has been attempted by the moderns. I have said in the chapter on symmetry in the second volume, that all landscape grandeur vanishes before that of Titian and Tintoret ; and this is true of whatever these two giants touched ;—but they touched little. A few level flakes of chestnut foliage ; a blue abstraction of hill forms from Cadore or the Euganeans ; a grand mass or two of glowing ground and mighty herbage, and a few burning fields of quiet cloud were all they needed ; there is evidence of Tintoret's having felt more than this, but it occurs only in secondary fragments of rock, cloud, or pine, hardly noticed among the accumulated interest of his human subject. From the window of Titian's house at Venice, the chain of the Tyrolese Alps is seen lifted in spectral power above the tufted plain of Treviso ; every dawn that reddens the towers of Murano lights also a line of pyramidal fires along that colossal ridge ; but there is, so far as I know, no evidence in any of the master's works of his ever having beheld, much less felt, the majesty of their burning. The dark firmament and saddened twilight of Tintoret are sufficient for their end ; but the sun never plunges behind San Giorgio in Aliga without such retinue of radiant cloud, such rest of zoned light on the green lagoon, as never received image from his hand. More than this, of that which they loved and rendered much is rendered conventionally ; by noble conventionalities indeed, but such nevertheless as would be inexcusable if the landscape became the principal subject instead of an accompaniment. I will instance only the San Pietro Martire, which, if not the most perfect, is at least the most popular of Titian's landscapes ; in which, to obtain light on the flesh of the near figures the sky is made as dark as deep sea, the mountains are laid in with violent and impossible blue, except one of them on the left, which, to connect the distant light with the foreground, is thrown into light relief, unexplained by its materials, unlikely in its position, and in its degree impossible under any circumstances.

§ 7. Causes of its want of influence on subsequent schools.

I do not instance these as faults in the picture : there are no works of very powerful color which are free from conventionality concentrated or diffused, daring or disguised ; but as the conventionality of this whole picture is mainly thrown into the landscape, it is necessary, while we acknowledge the virtue of this distance as a part of the great composition, to be on our guard against the license it assumes and the attractiveness of its overcharged color. Fragments of far purer truth occur in the works of Tintoret ; and in the drawing of foliage, whether rapid or elaborate, of masses or details, the Venetian painters, taken as a body, may be considered almost faultless models. But the whole field of what they have done is so narrow, and therein is so much of what is only relatively right, and in itself false or imperfect, that the young and inexperienced painter could run no greater risk than the too early taking them for teachers; and to the general spectator their landscape is valuable rather as a means of peculiar and solemn emotion than as ministering to, or inspiring the universal love of nature. Hence while men of serious mind, especially those whose pursuits have brought them into continued relations with the peopled rather than the lonely world, will always look to the Venetian painters as having touched those simple chords of landscape harmony which are most in unison with earnest and melancholy feeling; those whose philosophy is more cheerful and more extended, as having been trained and colored among simple and solitary nature, will seek for a wider and more systematic circle of teaching: they may grant that the barred horizontal gloom of the Titian sky, and the massy leaves of the Titian forest are among the most sublime of the conceivable forms of material things; but they know that the virtue of these very forms is to be learned only by right comparison of them with the cheerfulness, fulness and comparative inquietness of other hours and scenes; that they are not intended for the continual food, but the occasional soothing of the human heart; that there is a lesson of not less value in its place, though of less concluding and sealing authority, in every one of the more humble phases of material things: and that there are some lessons of equal or greater authority which these masters neither taught nor received. And until the school of modern landscape arose Art had never noted the links of this mighty chain; it mattered not that a fragment lay here and there, no heavenly lightning could descend by it; the landscape of the Venetians was without effect on any contemporary in subsequent schools; it still remains on the continent as useless as if it had never existed; and at this moment German and Italian landscapes, of which no words are scornful enough to befit the utter degradation, hang in the Venetian Academy in the next room to the Desert of Titian and the Paradise of Tintoret.*

§ 8. The value of inferior works of art how to be estimated.

That then which I would have the reader inquire respecting every work of art of undetermined merit submitted to his judgment, is not whether it be a work of especial grandeur, importance, or power; but whether it have *any* virtue or substance as a link in this chain of truth, whether it have recorded or interpreted anything before unknown, whether it have added one single stone to our heaven-pointing pyramid, cut away one dark bough, or levelled one rugged hillock in our path. This, if it be an honest work of art, it must have done, for no man ever yet worked honestly without giving some such help to his race. God appoints to every one of his creatures a separate mission, and if they discharge it honorably, if they quit themselves like men and faithfully follow that light which is in them, withdrawing from it all cold and quenching influence, there will assuredly come of it such burning as, in its appointed mode and measure, shall shine before men, and be of service constant and holy. Degrees infinite of lustre there must always be, but the weakest among us has a gift, however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him, and which worthily used will be a gift also to his race forever—

"Fool not," says George Herbert,

"For all may have,
If they dare choose, a glorious life or grave."

If, on the contrary, there be nothing of this freshness achieved, if there be neither purpose nor fidelity in what is done, if it be an envious or powerless imitation of other men's labors, if it be a display of mere manual dexterity or curious manufacture, or if in any other mode it show itself as having its origin in vanity,—Cast it out. It matters not what powers of mind may have been concerned or corrupted in it, all have lost their savor, it is worse than worthless;—perilous —Cast it out.

---

* Not the large Paradise, but the Fall of Adam, a small picture chiefly in brown and gray, near Titian's Assumption. Its companion, the Death of Abel, is remarkable as containing a group of trees which Turner, I believe accidentally, has repeated nearly mass for mass in the "Marly." Both are among the most noble works of this or any other master, whether for preciousness of color or energy of thought.

Works of art are indeed always of mixed kind, their honesty being more or less corrupted by the various weaknesses of the painter, by his vanity, his idleness, or his cowardice; (the fear of doing right has far more influence on art than is commonly thought,) that only is altogether to be rejected which is altogether vain, idle, and cowardly. Of the rest the rank is to be estimated rather by the purity of their metal than the coined value of it.

§ 9. Religious landscape of Italy. The admirableness of its completion.

Keeping these principles in view, let us endeavor to obtain something like a general view of the assistance which has been rendered to our study of nature by the various occurrences of landscape in elder art, and by the more exclusively directed labors of modern schools.

To the ideal landscape of the early religious painters of Italy I have alluded in the concluding chapter of the second volume. It is absolutely right and beautiful in its peculiar application; but its grasp of nature is narrow and its treatment in most respects too severe and conventional to form a profitable example when the landscape is to be alone the subject of thought. The great virtue of it is its entire, exquisite, and humble realization of those objects it selects; in this respect differing from such German imitations of it as I have met with, that there is no effort of any fanciful or ornamental modifications, but loving fidelity to the thing studied. The foreground plants are usually neither exaggerated nor stiffened; they do not form arches or frames or borders; their grace is unconfined, their simplicity undestroyed. Cima da Conegliano, in his picture in the church of the Madonna dell' Orto at Venice, has given us the oak, the fig, the beautiful "Erba della Madonna" on the wall, precisely such a bunch of it as may be seen growing at this day on the marble steps of that very church ; ivy and other creepers, and a strawberry plant in the foreground, with a blossom and a berry just set, and one half ripe and one ripe, all patiently and innocently painted from the real thing, and therefore most divine. Fra Angelico's use of the oxalis acetosella is as faithful in representation as touching in feeling.* The ferns that grow on the walls of Fiesole may be seen in their simple verity on the architecture of Ghirlandajo. The rose, the myrtle, and the lily, the olive and orange, pomegranate and vine, have received their fairest portraiture where they bear a sacred character ; even the common plantains and mallows of the waysides are touched with deep reverence by Raffaelle ; and indeed for the perfect treatment of details of this kind, treatment as delicate and affectionate as it is elevated and manly, it is to the works of these schools alone that we can refer. And on this their peculiar excellence I should the more earnestly insist, because it is of a kind altogether neglected by the English school, and with most unfortunate result, many of our best painters missing their deserved rank solely from the want of it, as Gainsborough ; and all being more or less checked in their progress or vulgarized in their aim.

§ 10. Finish, and the want of it, how right and how wrong.

It is a misfortune for all honest critics, that hardly any quality of art is independently to be praised, and without reference to the motive from which it resulted, and the place in which it appears ; so that no principle can be simply enforced but it shall seem to countenance a vice ; while the work of qualification and explanation both weakens the force of what is said, and is not perhaps always likely to be with patience received : so also those who desire to misunderstand or to oppose have it always in their power to become obtuse listeners or specious opponents. Thus I hardly dare insist upon the virtue of completion, lest I should be supposed a defender of Wouvermans or Gerard Dow; neither can I adequately praise the power of Tintoret, without fearing to be thought adverse to Holbein or Perugino. The fact is, that both finish and impetuosity, specific minuteness, or large abstraction, may be the signs of passion, or of its reverse; may result from affection or indifference, intellect or dulness. Some men finish from intense love of the beautiful in the smallest parts of what they do; others in pure incapability of comprehending anything but parts; others to show their dexterity with the brush, and prove expenditure of time. Some are impetuous and bold in their handling, from having great thoughts to express which are independent of detail; others because they have bad taste or have been badly taught; others from vanity, and others from indolence. (Compare Vol. II. Chap. IX. § 8.) Now both the finish and incompletion are right where they are the signs of passion or of thought, and both are wrong, and I think the finish the more contemptible of the two, when they cease to be so. The modern Italians will paint every leaf of a laurel or rose-bush without the slightest feeling of their beauty or character; and without showing one spark of intellect or affection from beginning to end. Anything is better than this; and yet the very highest schools *do* the same thing, or nearly so, but with totally different motives and perceptions, and the result is divine. On the whole, I conceive that the extremes of good and evil lie with the finishers, and that whatever glorious power we may admit in men like Tintoret, whatever attractiveness of method to Rubens, Rembrandt, or, though in far less degree, our own Reynolds, still the thoroughly great men are those who have done everything thoroughly, and who, in a word, have never despised anything, however small, of God's making. And this is the chief fault of our English landscapists, that they have not the intense all-observing penetration of well-balanced mind; they have not, except in one or two instances, anything of that feeling which Wordsworth shows in the following lines:—

---

* The triple leaf of this plant, and white flower, stained purple, probably gave it strange typical interest among the Christian painters. Angelico, in using its leaves mixed with daisies in the foreground of his Crucifixion had, I imagine, a view also to its chemical property.

"So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive;—
Would that the little flowers were born to live
Conscious of half the pleasure which they give.
That to this mountain daisy's self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone."

That is a little bit of good, downright, foreground painting—no mistake about it; daisy, and shadow, and stone texture and all. Our painters must come to this before they have done their duty; and yet, on the other hand, let them beware of finishing, for the sake of finish, all over their picture. The ground is not to be all over daisies, nor is every daisy to have its star-shaped shadow; there is as much finish in the right concealment of things as in the right exhibition of them; and while I demand this amount of specific character where nature shows it, I demand equal fidelity to her where she conceals it. To paint mist rightly, space rightly, and light rightly, it may be often necessary to paint nothing else rightly, but the rule is simple for all that; if the artist is painting something that he knows and loves, as he knows it because he loves it, whether it be the fair strawberry of Cima, or the clear sky of Francia, or the blazing incomprehensible mist of Turner, he is all right; but the moment he does anything as he thinks it ought to be, because he does not care about it, he is all wrong. He has only to ask himself whether he cares for anything except himself; so far as he does he will make a good picture; so far as he thinks of himself a vile one. This is the root of the viciousness of the whole French school. Industry they have, learning they have, power they have, feeling they have, yet not so much feeling as ever to force them to forget themselves even for a moment; the ruling motive is invariably vanity, and the picture therefore an abortion.

§ 11. The open skies of the religious schools, how valuable. Mountain drawing of Masaccio. Landscape of the Bellinis and Giorgione.

Returning to the pictures of the religious schools, we find that their open skies are also of the highest value. Their preciousness is such that no subsequent schools can by comparison be said to have painted sky at all, but only clouds, or mist, or blue canopies. The golden sky of Marco Basaiti in the Academy of Venice altogether overpowers and renders valueless that of Titian beside it. Those of Francia in the gallery of Bologna are even more wonderful, because cooler in tone and behind figures in full light. The touches of white light in the horizon of Angelico's Last Judgment are felt and wrought with equal truth. The dignified and simple forms of cloud in repose are often by these painters sublimely expressed, but of changeful cloud form they show no examples. The architecture, mountains, and water of these distances are commonly conventional; motives are to be found in them of the highest beauty, and especially remarkable for quantity and meaning of incident; but they can only be studied or accepted in the particular feeling that produced them. It may generally be observed that whatever has been the result of strong emotion is ill seen unless through the medium of such emotion, and will lead to conclusions utterly false and perilous, if it be made a subject of cold-hearted observance, or an object of systematic imitation. One piece of genuine mountain drawing, however, occurs in the landscape of Masaccio's Tribute Money. It is impossible to say what strange results might have taken place in this particular field of art, or how suddenly a great school of landscape might have arisen, had the life of this great painter been prolonged. Of this particular fresco I shall have much to say hereafter. The two brothers Bellini gave a marked and vigorous impulse to the landscape of Venice, of Gentile's architecture I shall speak presently. Giovanni's, though in style less interesting and in place less prominent, occurring chiefly as a kind of frame to his pictures, connecting them with the architecture of the churches for which they were intended, is in refinement of realization, I suppose, quite unrivalled, especially in passages requiring pure gradation, as the hollows of vaultings. That of Veronese would look ghostly beside it; that of Titian lightless. His landscape is occasionally quaint and strange like Giorgione's, and as fine in color, as that behind the Madonna in the Brera gallery at Milan; but a more truthful fragment occurs in the picture in San Francesco della Vigna at Venice; and in the picture of St. Jerome in the church of San Grisostomo, the landscape is as perfect and beautifu. as any background may legitimately be, and finer, as far as it goes, than anything of Titian's. It is remarkable for the absolute truth of its sky, whose blue, clear as crystal, and though deep in tone bright as the open air, is gradated to the horizon with a cautiousness and finish almost inconceivable; and to obtain light at the horizon without contradicting the system of chiaroscuro adopted in the figures which are lighted from the right hand, it is barred across with some glowing white cirri which, in their turn, are opposed by a single dark horizontal line of lower cloud; and to throw the whole farther back, there is a wreath of rain cloud of warmer color floating above the mountains, lighted on its under edge, whose faithfulness to nature, both in hue and in its light and shattering form, is altogether exemplary; the wandering of the light among the hills is equally studied, and the whole is crowned by the grand realization of the leaves of the fig-tree alluded to (Vol. II. Part III. Chap. 5,) as well as of the herbage upon the rocks. Considering that with all this care and completeness in the background, there is nothing that is not of meaning and necessity in reference to the figures, and that in the figures themselves the dignity and heavenliness of the highest religious painters are combined with a force and purity of color, greater I think than Titian's, it is a work which may be set before the young artist as in every respect a nearly faultless guide. Giorgione's landscape is inventive and solemn, but owing to the rarity even of his nominal works I dare not speak of it in general terms. It is certainly conventional, and is rather, I imagine, to be studied for its color and its motives than its details.

§ 12. Landscape of Titian and Tintoret.

Of Titian and Tintoret I have spoken already. The latter is every way the greater master, never indulging in the exaggerated color of Titian, and attaining far more perfect light; his grasp of nature is more extensive, and his view of her more imaginative, (incidental notices of his landscape will be found in the chapter on Imagination penetrative, of the second volume,) but he is usually too impatient to carry his thoughts as far out, or to realize with as much substantiality as Titian. In the St. Jerome of the latter, in the gallery of the Brera, there is a superb example of the modes in which the objects of landscape may be either suggested or elaborated according to their place and claim. The larger features of the ground, foliage, and drapery, as well as the lion in the lower angle, are executed with a slightness which admits not of close examination, and which, if not in shade, would be offensive to the generality of observers. But on the rock above the lion, where it turns towards the light, and where the eye is intended to dwell, there is a wreath of ivy of which every leaf is separately drawn with the greatest accuracy and care, and beside it a lizard, studied with equal earnestness, yet always with that right grandeur of manner to which I have alluded in the preface. Tintoret seldom reaches or attempts the elaboration in substance and color of these objects, but he is even more truth-telling and certain in his rendering of all the great characters of specific form, and as the painter of Space he stands altogether alone among dead masters; being the first who introduced the slightness and confusion of touch which are expressive of the effects of luminous objects seen through large spaces of air, and the principles of aerial color which have been since carried out in other fields by Turner. I conceive him to be the most powerful painter whom the world has seen, and that he was prevented from being also the most perfect, partly by untoward circumstances in his position and education, partly by the very fulness and impetuosity of his own mind, partly by the want of religious feeling and its accompanying perception of beauty; for his noble treatment of religious subject, of which I have given several examples in the third part, appears to be the result only of that grasp which a great and well-toned intellect necessarily takes of any subject submitted to it, and is wanting in the signs of the more withdrawn and sacred sympathies.

But whatever advances were made by Tintoret in modes of artistical treatment, he cannot be considered as having enlarged the sphere of landscape conception. He took no cognizance even of the materials and motives, so singularly rich in color, which were forever around him in his own Venice. All portions of Venetian scenery introduced by him are treated conventionally and carelessly ; the architectural characters lost altogether, the sea distinguished from the sky only by a darker green, while of the sky itself only those forms were employed by him which had been repeated again and again for centuries, though in less tangibility and completion. Of mountain scenery he has left, I believe, no example so far carried as that of John Bellini above instanced.

§ 13. Schools of Florence, Milan, and Bologna.

The Florentine and Ambrian schools supply us with no examples of landscape, except that introduced by their earliest masters, gradually overwhelmed under renaissance architecture.

Leonardo's landscape has been of unfortunate effect on art, so far as it has had effect at all. In realization of detail he verges on the ornamental, in his rock outlines he has all the deficiencies and little of the feeling of the earlier men. Behind the "Sacrifice for the Friends" of Giotto at Pisa, there is a sweet piece of rock incident, a little fountain breaking out at the mountain foot, and trickling away, its course marked by branches of reeds, the latter formal enough certainly, and always in triplets, but still with a sense of nature pervading the whole which is utterly wanting to the rocks of Leonardo in the Holy Family in the Louvre. The latter are grotesque without being ideal, and extraordinary without being impressive. The sketch in the Uffizii of Florence has some fine foliage, and there is of course a certain virtue in all the work of a man like Leonardo which I would not depreciate, but our admiration of it in this particular field must be qualified, and our following cautious.

No advances were made in landscape, so far as I know, after the time of Tintoret ; the power of art ebbed gradually away from the derivative schools ; various degrees of cleverness or feeling being manifested in more or less brilliant conventionalism. I once supposed there was some life in the landscape of Domenichino, but in this I must have been wrong. The man who painted the Madonna del Rosario and Martyrdom of St. Agnes in the gallery of Bologna, is palpably incapable of doing anything good, great, or right in any field, way, or kind, whatsoever.*

§ 14. Claude, Salvator, and the Poussins.

Though, however, at this period the general grasp of the schools was perpetually contracting, a gift was given to the world by Claude, for which we are perhaps hardly enough grateful, owing to the very frequency of our after enjoyment of it. He set the sun in heaven, and was, I suppose, the first who attempted anything like the realization of actual sunshine in misty air. He gives the first example of the study of nature for her own sake, and allowing for the unfortunate circumstances of his education, and for his evident inferiority of intellect, more could hardly have been expected from him. His false taste, forced composition, and ignorant rendering of detail have perhaps been of more detriment to art than the gift he gave was of advantage. The character of his own mind is singular; I know of no other instance of a man's working from nature continually with the desire of being true, and never attaining the power of drawing so much as a bough of a tree rightly. Salvator, a man originally endowed with far higher power of mind than Claude, was altogether unfaithful to his mission, and has left us, I believe, no gift. Everything that he did is evidently for the sake of exhibiting his own dexterity; there is no love of any kind for anything; his choice of landscape features is dictated by no delight in the sublime, but by mere animal restlessness or ferocity, guided by an imaginative power of which he could not altogether deprive himself. He has done nothing which others have not done better, or which it would not have been better not to have done; in nature, he mistakes distortion for energy, and savageness for sublimity; in man, mendicity for sanctity, and conspiracy for heroism.

---

* This is no rash method of judgment, sweeping and hasty as it may appear. From the weaknesses of an artist, or failures, however numerous, we have no right to conjecture his total inability; a time may come when he may rise into sudden strength, or an instance occur when his efforts shall be successful. But there are some pictures which rank not under the head of failures, but of perpetrations or commissions; some things which a man cannot do nor say without sealing forever his character and capacity. The angel holding the cross with his finger in his eye, the roaring red-faced children about the crown of thorns, the blasphemous (I speak deliberately and determinedly) head of Christ upon the handkerchief, and the mode in which the martyrdom of the saint is exhibited (I do not choose to use the expressions which alone could characterize it) are perfect, sufficient, incontrovertible proofs that whatever appears good in any of the doings of such a painter must be deceptive, and that we may be assured that our taste is corrupted and false whenever we feel disposed to admire him. I am prepared to support this position, however uncharitable it may seem; a man may be tempted into a gross sin by passion, and forgiven; and yet there are some kinds of sins into which only men of a certain kind can be tempted, and which cannot be forgiven. It should be added, however, that the artistical qualities of these pictures are in every way worthy of the conceptions they realize; I do not recollect any instances of color or execution so coarse and feelingless.

The landscape of Nicolo Poussin shows much power, and is usually composed and elaborated on right principles, (compare preface to second edition,) but I am aware of nothing that it has attained of new or peculiar excellence; it is a graceful mixture of qualities to be found in other masters in higher degrees. In finish it is inferior to Leonardo's, in invention to Giorgione's, in truth to Titian's, in grace to Raffaelle's. The landscapes of Gaspar have serious feeling and often valuable and solemn color; virtueless otherwise, they are full of the most degraded mannerism, and I believe the admiration of them to have been productive of extensive evil among recent schools.

§ 15. German and Flemish landscape.

The development of landscape north of the Alps, presents us with the same general phases under modifications dependent partly on less intensity of feeling, partly on diminished availableness of landscape material. That of the religious painters is treated with the same affectionate completion; but exuberance of fancy sometimes diminishes the influence of the imagination, and the absence of the Italian force of passion admits of more patient and somewhat less intellectual elaboration. A morbid habit of mind is evident in many, seeming to lose sight of the balance and relations of things, so as to become intense in trifles, gloomily minute, as in Albert Durer ; and this mingled with a feverish operation of the fancy, which appears to result from certain habitual conditions of bodily health rather than of mental culture, (and of which the sickness without the power is eminently characteristic of the modern Germans ;) but with all this there are virtues of the very highest order in those schools, and I regret that my knowledge is insufficient to admit of my giving any detailed account of them.

In the landscape of Rembrandt and Rubens, we have the northern parallel to the power of the Venetians. Among the etchings and drawings of Rembrandt, landscape thoughts may be found not unworthy of Titian, and studies from nature of sublime fidelity ; but his system of chiaroscuro was inconsistent with the gladness, and his peculiar modes of feeling with the grace, of nature ; nor from my present knowledge can I name any work on canvas in which he has carried out the dignity of his etched conceptions, or exhibited any perceptiveness of new truths.

Not so Rubens, who perhaps furnishes us with the first instances of complete unconventional unaffected landscape. His treatment is healthy, manly, and rational, not very affectionate, yet often condescending to minute and multitudinous detail ; always as far as it goes pure, forcible, and refreshing, consummate in composition, and marvellous in color. In the Pitti palace, the best of its two Rubens landscapes has been placed near a characteristic and highly-finished Titian, the marriage of St. Catherine. But for the grandeur of line and solemn feeling in the flock of sheep, and the figures of the latter work, I doubt if all its glow and depth of tone could support its overcharged green and blue against the open breezy sunshine of the Fleming. I do not mean to rank the art of Rubens with that of Titian, but it is always to be remembered that Titian hardly ever paints sunshine, but a certain opalescent twilight which has as much of human emotion as of imitative truth in it,—

> "The clouds that gather round the setting sun
> Do take a sober coloring from an eye
> That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality:"

and that art of this kind must always be liable to some appearance of failure when compared with a less pathetic statement of facts.

It is to be noted, however, that the licenses taken by Rubens in particular instances are as bold as his general statements are sincere. In the landscape just instanced the horizon is an oblique line; in the Sunset of our own gallery many of the shadows fall at right angles to the light; and in a picture in the Dulwich gallery a rainbow is seen by the spectator at the side of the sun.

These bold and frank licenses are not to be considered as detracting from the rank of the painter; they are usually characteristic of those minds whose grasp of nature is so certain and extensive as to enable them fearlessly to sacrifice a truth of actuality to a truth of feeling. Yet the young artist must keep in mind that the painter's greatness consists not in his taking, but in his atoning for them.

§ 16. The lower Dutch schools.

Among the professed landscapists of the Dutch school, we find much dexterous imitation of certain kinds of nature, remarkable usually for its persevering rejection of whatever is great, valuable, or affecting in the object studied. Where, however, they show real desire to paint what they saw as far as they saw it, there is of course much in them that is instructive, as in Cuyp and in the etchings of Waterloo, which have even very sweet and genuine feeling; and so in some of their architectural painters. But the object of the great body of them is merely to display manual dexterities of one kind or another, and their effect on the public mind is so totally for evil, that though I do not deny the advantage an artist of real judgment may derive from the study of some of them, I conceive the best patronage that any monarch could possibly bestow upon the arts, would be to collect the whole body of them into a grand gallery and burn it to the ground.

§17. English school, Wilson and Gainsborough.

Passing to the English school, we find a connecting link between them and the Italians formed by Richard Wilson. Had this artist studied under favorable circumstances, there is evidence of his having possessed power enough to produce an original picture; but, corrupted by study of the Poussins, and gathering his materials chiefly in their field, the district about Rome—a district especially unfavorable, as exhibiting no pure or healthy nature, but a diseased and overgrown Flora among half-developed volcanic rocks, loose calcareous concretions, and mouldering wrecks of buildings—and whose spirit, I conceive, to be especially opposed to the natural tone of the English mind, his originality was altogether overpowered, and, though he paints in a manly way and occasionally reaches exquisite tones of color, as in the small and very precious picture belonging to Mr. Rogers, and sometimes manifests some freshness of feeling, as in the Villa of Mæcenas of our National Gallery, yet his pictures are in general mere diluted adaptations from Poussin and Salvator, without the dignity of the one or the fire of the other.

Not so Gainsborough—a great name his, whether of the English or any other school. The greatest colorist since Rubens, and the last, I think, of legitimate colorists; that is to say, of those who were fully acquainted with the power of their material; pure in his English feeling, profound in his seriousness, graceful in his gayety, there are nevertheless certain deductions to be made from his worthiness which yet I dread to make, because my knowledge of his landscape works is not extensive enough to justify me in speaking of them decisively; but this is to be noted of all that I know, that they are rather motives of feeling and color than earnest studies; that their execution is in some degree mannered, and always hasty; that they are altogether wanting in the affectionate detail of which I have already spoken; and that their color is in some measure dependent on a bituminous brown and conventional green which have more of science than of truth in them. These faults may be sufficiently noted in the magnificent picture presented by him to the Royal Academy, and tested by a comparison of it with the Turner (Llanberis,) in the same room. Nothing can be more attractively luminous or aerial than the distance of the Gainsborough, nothing more bold or inventive than the forms of its crags and the diffusion of the broad distant light upon them, where a vulgar artist would have thrown them into dark contrast. But it will be found that the light of the distance is brought out by a violent exaggeration of the gloom in the valley ; that the forms of the green trees which bear the chief light are careless and ineffective ; that the markings of the crags are equally hasty ; and that no object in the foreground has realization enough to enable the eye to rest upon it. The Turner, a much feebler picture in its first impression, and altogether inferior in the quality and value of its individual hues, will yet be found in the end more forcible, because unexaggerated ; its gloom is moderate and aerial, its light deep in tone, its color entirely unconventional, and the forms of its rocks studied with the most devoted care. With Gainsborough terminates the series of painters connected with the elder schools. By whom, among those yet living or lately lost, the impulse was first given to modern landscape, I attempt not to decide. Such questions are rather invidious than interesting ; the particular tone or direction of any school seems to me always to have resulted rather from certain phases of national character, limited to particular periods, than from individual teaching ; and, especially among moderns, what has been good in each master has been commonly original.

§ 18. Constable, Calcott.

I have already alluded to the simplicity and earnestness of the mind of Constable ; to its vigorous rupture with school laws, and to its unfortunate error on the opposite side. Unteachableness seems to have been a main feature of his character, and there is corresponding want of veneration in the way he approaches nature herself. His early education and associations were also against him; they induced in him a morbid preference of subjects of a low order. I have never seen any work of his in which there were any signs of his being able to draw, and hence even the most necessary details are painted by him inefficiently. His works are also eminently wanting both in rest and refinement, and Fuseli's jesting compliment is too true; for the showery weather in which the artist delights, misses alike the majesty of storm and the loveliness of calm weather: it is great-coat weather, and nothing more. There is strange want of depth in the mind which has no pleasure in sunbeams but when piercing painfully through clouds, nor in foliage but when shaken by the wind, nor in light itself but when flickering, glistening, restless, and feeble. Yet, with all these deductions, his works are to be deeply respected as thoroughly original, thoroughly honest, free from affectation, manly in manner, frequently successful in cool color, and especially realizing certain motives of English scenery with perhaps as much affection as such scenery, unless when regarded through media of feeling derived from higher sources, is calculated to inspire.

On the works of Calcott, high as his reputation stands, I should look with far less respect; I see not any preference or affection in the artist; there is no tendency in him with which we can sympathize, nor does there appear any sign of aspiration, effort, or enjoyment in any one of his works. He appears to have completed them methodically, to have been content with them when completed, to have thought them good, legitimate, regular pictures; perhaps in some respects better than nature. He painted everything tolerably, and nothing excellently; he has given us no gift, struck for us no light, and though he has produced one or two valuable works, of which the finest I know is the Marine in the possession of Sir J. Swinburne, they will, I believe, in future have no place among those considered representative of the English school.

§ 19. Peculiar tendency of recent landscape.

Throughout the range of elder art it will be remembered we have found no instance of the faithful painting of mountain scenery, except in a faded background of Masaccio's: nothing more than rocky eminences, undulating hills, or fantastic crags, and even these treated altogether under typical forms. The more specific study of mountains seems to have coincided with the most dexterous practice of water-color; but it admits of doubt whether the choice of subject has been directed by the vehicle, or whether, as I rather think, the tendency of national feeling has been followed in the use of the most appropriate means. Something is to be attributed to the increased demand for slighter works of art, and much to the sense of the quality of objects now called picturesque, which appears to be exclusively of modern origin. From what feeling the character of middle-age architecture and costume arose, or with what kind of affection their forms were regarded by the inventors, I am utterly unable to guess; but of this I think we may be assured, that the natural instinct and child-like wisdom of those days were altogether different from the modern feeling, which appears to have taken its origin in the absence of such objects, and to be based rather on the strangeness of their occurrence than on any real affection for them; and which is certainly so shallow and ineffective as to be instantly and always sacrificed by the majority to fashion, comfort, or economy. Yet I trust that there is a healthy though feeble love of nature mingled with it, nature pure, separate, felicitous, which is also peculiar to the moderns; and as signs of this feeling, or ministers to it, I look with veneration upon many works which, in a technical point of view, are of minor importance.

§ 20. G. Robson, D. Cox. False use of the term "style"

I have been myself indebted for much teaching and more delight to those of the late G. Robson. Weaknesses there are in them manifold, much bad drawing, much forced color, much over finish, little of what artists call composition; but there is thorough affection for the thing drawn; they are serious and quiet in the highest degree, certain qualities of atmosphere and texture in them have never been excelled, and certain facts of mountain scenery never but by them expressed, as, for instance, the stillness and depth of the mountain tarns, with the reversed imagery of their darkness signed across by the soft lines of faintly touching winds; the solemn flush of the brown fern and glowing heath under evening light; the purple mass of mountains far removed, seen against clear still twilight. With equal gratitude I look to the drawings of David Cox, which, in spite of their loose and seemingly careless execution, are not less serious in their meaning, nor less important in their truth. I must, however, in reviewing those modern works in which certain modes of execution are particularly manifested, insist especially on this general principle, applicable to all times of art; that what is usually called the style or manner of an artist is, in all good art, nothing but the best means of getting at the particular truth which the artist wanted; it is not a mode peculiar to himself of getting at the same truths as other men, but the *only* mode of getting the particular facts he desires, and which mode, if others had desired to express those facts, they also must have adopted. All habits of execution persisted in under no such necessity, but because the artist has invented them, or desires to show his dexterity in them, are utterly base; for every good painter finds so much difficulty in reaching the end he sees and desires, that he has no time nor power left for playing tricks on the road to it; he catches at the easiest and best means he can get; it is possible that such means may be singular, and then it will be said that his *style* is strange; but it is not a style at all, it is the saying of a particular thing in the only way in which it possibly can be said. Thus the reed pen outline and peculiar touch of Prout, which are frequently considered as mere manner, are in fact the only means of expressing the crumbling character of stone which the artist loves and desires. That character never has been expressed except by him, nor will it ever be expressed except by his means. And it is of the greatest importance to distinguish this kind of necessary and virtuous manner from the conventional manners very frequent in derivative schools, and always utterly to be contemned, wherein an artist, desiring nothing and feeling nothing, executes everything in his own particular mode, and teaches emulous scholars how to do with difficulty what might have been done with ease. It is true that there are sometimes instances in which great masters have employed different means of getting at the same end, but in these cases their choice has been always of those which to them appeared the shortest and most complete; their practice has never been prescribed by affectation or continued from habit, except so far as must be expected from such weakness as is common to all men; from hands that necessarily do most readily what they are most accustomed to do, and minds always liable to prescribe to the hands that which they can do most readily.

The recollection of this will keep us from being offended with the loose and blotted handling of David Cox. There is no other means by which his object could be attained. The looseness, coolness, and moisture of his herbage; the rustling crumpled freshness of his broad-leaved weeds; the play of pleasant light across his deep heathered moor or plashing sand; the melting of fragments of white mist into the dropping blue above; all this has not been fully recorded except by him, and what there is of accidental in his mode of reaching it, answers gracefully to the accidental part of nature herself. Yet he is capable of more than this, and if he suffers himself uniformly to paint beneath his capability, that which began in feeling must necessarily end in manner. He paints too many small pictures, and perhaps has of late permitted his peculiar execution to be more manifest than is necessary. Of this, he is himself the best judge. For almost all faults of this kind the public are answerable, not the painter. I have alluded to one of his grander works—such as I should wish always to see him paint—in the preface; another, I think still finer, a red sunset on distant hills, almost unequalled for truth and power of color, was painted by him several years ago, and remains, I believe, in his own possession.

§ 21. Copley Fielding. Phenomena of distant color.

The deserved popularity of Copley Fielding has rendered it less necessary for me to allude frequently to his works in the following pages than it would otherwise have been, more especially as my own sympathies and enjoyments are so entirely directed in the channel which his art has taken, that I am afraid of trusting them too far. Yet I may, perhaps, be permitted to speak of myself so far as I suppose my own feelings to be representative of those of a class ; and I suppose that there are many who, like myself, at some period of their life have derived more intense and healthy pleasure from the works of this painter than of any other whatsoever ; healthy, because always based on his faithful and simple rendering of nature, and that of very lovely and impressive nature, altogether freed from coarseness, violence, or vulgarity. Various references to that which he has attained will be found subsequently : what I am now about to say respecting what he has *not* attained, is not in depreciation of what he has accomplished, but in regret at his suffering powers of a high order to remain in any measure dormant.

He indulges himself too much in the use of crude color. Pure cobalt, violent rose, and purple, are of frequent occurrence in his distances ; pure siennas and other browns in his foregrounds, and that not as expressive of lighted but of local color. The reader will find in the following chapters that I am no advocate for subdued coloring ; but crude color is not bright color, and there was never a noble or brilliant work of color yet produced, whose real form did not depend on the subduing of its tints rather than the elevation of them.

It is perhaps one of the most difficult lessons to learn in art, that the warm colors of distance, even the most glowing, are subdued by the air so as in no wise to resemble the same color seen on a foreground object ; so that the rose of sunset on clouds or mountains has a gray in it which distinguishes it from the rose color of the leaf of a flower ; and the mingling of this gray of distance, without in the slightest degree taking away the expression of the intense and perfect purity of the color in and by itself, is perhaps the last attainment of the great landscape colorist. In the same way the blue of distance, however intense, is not the blue of a bright blue flower, and it is not distinguished from it by different texture merely, but by a certain intermixture and under current of warm color, which is altogether wanting in many of the blues of Fielding's distances ; and so of every bright distant color ; while in foreground where colors may be, and ought to be, pure, yet that any of them are expressive of light is only to be felt where there is the accurate fitting of them to their relative shadows which we find in the works of Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, Veronese, Turner, and all other great colorists in proportion as they are so. Of this fitting of light to shadow Fielding is altogether regardless, so that his foregrounds are constantly assuming the aspect of over-charged local color instead of sunshine, and his figures and cattle look transparent.

§ 22. Beauty of mountain foreground.

Again, the finishing of Fielding's foregrounds, as regards their drawing, is minute without accuracy, multitudinous without thought, and confused without mystery. Where execution is seen to be in measure accidental, as in Cox, it may be received as representative of what is accidental in nature ; but there is no part of Fielding's foreground that is accidental ; it is evidently worked and re-worked, dotted, rubbed, and finished with great labor, and where the virtue, playfulness, and freedom of accident are thus removed, one of two virtues must be substituted for them. Either we must have the deeply studied and imaginative foreground, of which every part is necessary to every other, and whose every spark of light is essential to the well-being of the whole, of which the foregrounds of Turner in the Liber Studiorum are the most eminent examples I know, or else we must have in some measure the botanical faithfulness and realization of the early masters. Neither of these virtues is to be found in Fielding's. Its features, though grouped with feeling, are yet scattered and inessential. Any one of them might be altered in many ways without doing harm ; there is no proportioned, necessary, unalterable relation among them ; no evidence of invention or of careful thought, while on the other hand there is no botanical or geological accuracy, nor any point on which the eye may rest with thorough contentment in its realization.

It seems strange that to an artist of so quick feeling the details of a mountain foreground should not prove irresistibly attractive, and entice him to greater accuracy of study. There is not a fragment of its living rock, nor a tuft of its heathery herbage, that has not adorable manifestations of God's working thereupon. The harmonies of color among the native lichens are better than Titian's; the interwoven bells of campanula and heather are better than all the arabesques of the Vatican; they need no improvement, arrangement, nor alteration, nothing but love, and every combination of them is different from every other, so that a painter need never repeat himself if he will only be true; yet all these sources of power have been of late entirely neglected by Fielding; there is evidence through all his foregrounds of their being mere home inventions, and like all home inventions they exhibit perpetual resemblances and repetitions; the painter is evidently embarrassed without his rutted road in the middle, and his boggy pool at the side, which pool he has of late painted in hard lines of violent blue: there is not a stone, even of the nearest and most important, which has its real lichens upon it, or a studied form or anything more to occupy the mind than certain variations of dark and light browns. The same faults must be found with his present painting of foliage, neither the stems nor leafage being ever studied from nature; and this is the more to be regretted, because in the earlier works of the artist there was much admirable drawing, and even yet his power is occasionally developed in his larger works, as in a Bolton Abbey on canvas, which was,—I cannot say, exhibited,—but was in the rooms of the Royal Academy in 1843.* I should have made the preceding remarks with more hesitation and diffidence, but that, from a comparison of works of this kind with the slighter ornaments of the water-color rooms, it seems evident that the painter is not unaware of the deficiencies of these latter, and concedes something of what he would himself desire to what he has found to be the feeling of a majority of his admirers. This is a dangerous modesty, and especially so in these days when the judgment of the many is palpably as artificial as their feeling is cold.

---

* It appears not to be sufficiently understood by those artists who complain acrimoniously of their position on the Academy walls, that the Academicians have in their own rooms a right to the line and the best places near it; in their taking this position there is no abuse nor injustice; but the Academicians should remember that with their rights they have their duties, and their duty is to determine among the works of artists not belonging to their body those which are most likely to advance public knowledge and judgment, and to give these the best places next their own; neither would it detract from their dignity if they

§ 23. De Wint. There is much that is instructive and deserving of high praise in the sketches of De Wint. Yet it is to be remembered that even the pursuit of truth, however determined, will have results limited and imperfect when its chief motive is the pride of being true ; and I fear that these works, sublime as many of them have unquestionably been, testify more accuracy of eye and experience of color than exercise of thought. Their truth of effect is often purchased at too great an expense by the loss of all beauty of form, and of the higher refinements of color ; deficiencies, however, on which I shall not insist, since the value of the sketches, as far as they go, is great ; they have done good

occasionally ceded a square even of their own territory, as they did gracefully and rightly, and, I am sorry to add, disinterestedly, to the picture of Paul de la Roche in 1844. Now the Academicians know perfectly well that the mass of portrait which encumbers their walls at half height is worse than useless, seriously harmful to the public taste, and it was highly criminal (I use the word advisedly) that the valuable and interesting work of Fielding, of which I have above spoken, should have been placed where it was, above three rows of eye-glasses and waistcoats. A very beautiful work of Harding's was treated either in the same or the following exhibition, with still greater injustice. Fielding's was merely put out of sight ; Harding's where its faults were conspicuous and its virtues lost. It was an Alpine scene, of which the foreground, rocks, and torrents were painted with unrivalled fidelity and precision ; the foliage was dexterous, the aerial gradations of the mountains tender and multitudinous, their forms carefully studied and very grand. The blemish of the picture was a buff-colored tower with a red roof ; singularly meagre in detail, and conventionally relieved from a mass of gloom. The picture was placed where nothing but this tower could be seen.

service and set good example, and whatever their failings may be, there is evidence in them that the painter has always done what he believed to be right.

§ 24. Influence of Engraving. J. D. Harding.

The influence of the masters of whom we have hitherto spoken is confined to those who have access to their actual works, since the particular qualities in which they excel, are in no wise to be rendered by the engraver. Those of whom we have next to speak are known to the public in a great measure by the help of the engraver; and while their influence is thus very far extended, their modes of working are perhaps, in some degree modified by the habitual reference to the future translation into light and shade; reference which is indeed beneficial in the care it induces respecting the arrangement of the chiaroscuro and the explanation of the forms, but which is harmful, so far as it involves a dependence rather on quantity of picturesque material than on substantial color or simple treatment, and as it admits of indolent diminution of size and slightness of execution.

We should not be just to the present works of J. D. Harding unless we took this influence into account. Some years back none of our artists realized more laboriously, nor obtained more substantial color and texture; a large drawing in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham, is of great value as an example of his manner at the period; a manner not only careful, but earnest, and free from any kind of affectation. Partly from the habit of making slight and small drawings for engravers, and partly also, I imagine, from an overstrained seeking after appearances of dexterity in execution, his drawings have of late years become both less solid and less complete; not, however, without attaining certain brilliant qualities in exchange which are very valuable in the treatment of some of the looser portions of subject. Of the extended knowledge and various powers of this painter, frequent instances are noted in the following pages. Neither, perhaps, are rightly estimated among artists, owing to a certain coldness of sentiment in his choice of subject, and a continual preference of the picturesque to the impressive ; proved perhaps in nothing so distinctly as in the little interest usually attached to his skies, which, if aerial and expressive of space and movement, content him, though destitute of story, power, or character : an exception must be made in favor of the very grand sunrise on the Swiss Alps, exhibited in 1844, wherein the artist's real power was in some measure displayed, though I am convinced he is still capable of doing far greater things. So in his foliage he is apt to sacrifice the dignity of his trees to their wildness, and lose the forest in the copse, neither is he at all accurate enough in his expression of species or realization of near portions. These are deficiencies, be it observed, of sentiment, not of perception, as there are few who equal him in rapidity of seizure of material truth.

§ 25. Samuel Prout. Early painting of architecture, how deficient.

Very extensive influence in modern art must be attributed to the works of Samuel Prout ; and as there are some circumstances belonging to his treatment of architectural subject which it does not come within the sphere of the following chapters to examine, I shall endeavor to note the more important of them here.

Let us glance back for a moment to the architectural drawing of earlier times. Before the time of the Bellinis at Venice, and of Ghirlandajo at Florence, I believe there are no examples of anything beyond conventional representation of architecture, often rich, quaint, and full of interest, as Memmi's abstract of the Duomo at Florence at S^{ta}. Maria Novella ; but not to be classed with any genuine efforts at representation. It is much to be regretted that the power and custom of introducing well-drawn architecture should have taken place only when architectural taste had been itself corrupted, and that the architecture introduced by Bellini, Ghirlandajo, Francia, and the other patient and powerful workmen of the fifteenth century, is exclusively of the renaissance styles ; while their drawing of it furnishes little that is of much interest to the architectural draughtsman as such, being always governed by a reference to its subordinate position, so that all forceful shadow and play of color are (most justly) surrendered for quiet and uniform hues of gray and chiaroscuro of extreme simplicity. Whatever they chose to do they did with consummate grandeur, (note especially the chiaroscuro of the square window of Ghirlandajo's, which so much delighted Vasari, in Sta. Maria Novella; and the daring management of a piece of the perspective in the Salutation, opposite, where he has painted a flight of stairs descending in front, though the picture is twelve feet above the eye); and yet this grandeur, in all these men, results rather from the general power obtained in their drawing of the figure than from any definite knowledge respecting the things introduced in these accessory parts; so that while in some points it is impossible for any painter to equal these accessories, unless he were in all respects as great as Ghirlandajo or Bellini, in others it is possible for him, with far inferior powers, to attain a representation both more accurate and more interesting.

In order to arrive at the knowledge of these, we must briefly take note of a few of the modes in which architecture itself is agreeable to the mind, especially of the influence upon the character of the building which is to be attributed to the signs of age.

§ 26. Effects of age upon buildings, how far desirable.

It is evident, first, that if the design of the building be originally bad, the only virtue it can ever possess will be in signs of antiquity. All that in this world enlarges the sphere of affection or imagination is to be reverenced, and all those circumstances enlarge it which strengthen our memory or quicken our conception of the dead; hence it is no light sin to destroy anything that is old, more especially because, even with the aid of all obtainable records of the past, we, the living, occupy a space of too large importance and interest in our own eyes; we look upon the world too much as our own, too much as if we had possessed it and should possess it forever, and forget that it is a mere hostelry, of which we occupy the apartments for a time, which others better than we have sojourned in before, who are now where we should desire to be with them. Fortunately for mankind, as some counterbalance to that wretched love of novelty which originates in selfishness, shallowness, and conceit, and which especially characterizes all vulgar minds, there is set in the deeper places of the heart such affection for the signs of age that the eye is delighted even by injuries which are the work of time; not but that there is also real and absolute beauty in the forms and colors so obtained, for which the original lines of the architecture, unless they have been very grand indeed, are well exchanged, so that there is hardly any building so ugly but that it may be made an agreeable object by such appearances. It would not be easy, for instance, to find a less pleasing piece of architecture than the portion of the front of Queen's College, Oxford, which has just been restored; yet I believe that few persons could have looked with total indifference on the mouldering and peeled surface of the oolite limestone previous to its restoration. If, however, the character of the building consist in minute detail or multitudinous lines, the evil or good effect of age upon it must depend in great measure on the kind of art, the material, and the climate. The Parthenon, for instance, would be injured by any markings which interfered with the contours of its sculptures; and any lines of extreme purity, or colors of original harmony and perfection are liable to injury, and are ill exchanged for mouldering edges or brown weatherstains.

But as all architecture is, or ought to be, meant to be durable, and to derive part of its glory from its antiquity, all art that is liable to mortal injury from effects of time is therein out of place, and this is another reason for the principle I have asserted in the second part, page 277. I do not at this instant recollect a single instance of any very fine building which is not improved up to a certain period by all its signs of age, after which period, like all other human works, it necessarily declines, its decline being in almost all ages and countries accelerated by neglect and abuse in its time of beauty, and alteration or restoration in its time of age.

Thus I conceive that all buildings dependent on color, whether of mosaic or painting, have their effect improved by the richness of the subsequent tones of age; for there are few arrangements of color so perfect but that they are capable of improvement by some softening and blending of this kind: with mosaic, the improvement may be considered as proceeding almost so long as the design can be distinctly seen; with painting, so long as the colors do not change or chip off.

Again, upon all forms of sculptural ornament, the effect of time is such, that if the design be poor, it will enrich it; if overcharged, simplify it; if harsh and violent, soften it; if smooth and obscure, exhibit it; whatever faults it may have are rapidly disguised, whatever virtue it has still shines and steals out in the mellow light; and this to such an extent, that the artist is always liable to be tempted to the drawing of details in old buildings as of extreme beauty, which look cold and hard in their architectural lines; and I have never yet seen any restoration or cleaned portion of a building whose effect was not inferior to the weathered parts, even to those of which the design had in some parts almost disappeared. On the front of the church of San Michele at Lucca, the mosaics have fallen out of half the columns, and lie in weedy ruin beneath; in many, the frost has torn large masses of the entire coating away, leaving a scarred unsightly surface. Two of the shafts of the upper star window are eaten entirely away by the sea wind, the rest have lost their proportions, the edges of the arches are hacked into deep hollows, and cast indented shadows on the weed-grown wall. The process has gone too far, and yet I doubt not but that this building is seen to greater advantage now than when first built, always with exception of one circumstance, that the French shattered the lower wheel window, and set up in front of it an escutcheon with "Libertas" upon it, which abomination of desolation, the Lucchese have not yet had human-heartedness enough to pull down.

Putting therefore the application of architecture as an accessory out of the question, and supposing our object to be the exhibition of the most impressive qualities of the building itself, it is evidently the duty of the draughtsman to represent it under those conditions, and with that amount of age-mark upon it which may best exalt and harmonize the sources of its beauty : this is no pursuit of mere picturesqueness, it is true following out of the ideal character of the building ; nay, far greater dilapidation than this may in portions be exhibited, for there are beauties of other kinds, not otherwise attainable, brought out by advanced dilapidation ; but when the artist suffers the mere love of ruinousness to interfere with his perception of the *art* of the building, and substitutes rude fractures and blotting stains for all its fine chiselling and determined color, he has lost the end of his own art.

§ 27. Effects of light, how necessary to the understanding of detail.

So far of aging ; next of effects of light and color. It is, I believe, hardly enough observed among architects that the same decorations are of totally different effect according to their position and the time of day. A moulding which is of value on a building facing south, where it takes deep shadows from steep sun, may be utterly ineffective if placed west or east ; and a moulding which is chaste and intelligible in shade on a north side, may be grotesque, vulgar, or confused when it takes black shadows on the south. Farther, there is a time of day in which every architectural decoration is seen to best advantage, and certain times in which its peculiar force and character are best explained ; of these niceties the architect takes little cognizance, as he must in some sort calculate on the effect of ornament at all times ; but to the artist they are of infinite importance, and especially for this reason, that there is always much detail on buildings which cannot be drawn as such, which is too far off, or too minute, and which must consequently be set down in short-hand of some kind or another ; and, as it were, an abstract, more or less philosophical, made of its general heads. Of the style of this abstract, of the lightness, confusion, and mystery necessary in it, I have spoken elsewhere ; at present I insist only on the arrangement and matter of it. All good ornament and all good architecture are capable of being put into shorthand ; that is, each has a perfect system of parts, principal and subordinate, of which, even when the complemental details vanish in distance, the system and anatomy yet remain visible so long as anything is visible ; so that the divisions of a beautiful spire shall be known as beautiful even till their last line vanishes in blue mist, and the effect of a well-designed moulding shall be visibly disciplined, harmonious, and inventive, as long as it is seen to be a moulding at all. Now the power of the artist of marking this character depends not on his complete knowledge of the design, but on his experimental knowledge of its salient and bearing parts, and of the effects of light and shadow, by which their saliency is best told. He must therefore be prepared, according to his subject, to use light, steep or level, intense or feeble, and out of the resulting chiaroscuro select those peculiar and hinging points on which the rest are based, and by which all else that is essential may be explained.

The thoughtful command of all these circumstances constitutes the real architectural draughtsman ; the habits of executing everything either under one kind of effect or in one manner, or of using unintelligible and meaningless abstracts of beautiful designs, are those which must commonly take the place of it and are the most extensively esteemed.*

§ 28. Architectural painting of Gentile Bellini and Vittor Carpaccio ;

Let us now proceed with our review of those artists who have devoted themselves more peculiarly to architectural subject.

Foremost among them stand Gentile Bellini and Vittor Carpaccio, to whom we are indebted for the only existing faithful statements of the architecture of Old Venice, and who are the only authorities to whom we can trust in conjecturing the former beauty of those few desecrated fragments, the last of which are now being rapidly swept away by the idiocy of modern Venetians.

Nothing can be more careful, nothing more delicately finished, or more dignified in feeling than the works of both these men ; and as architectural evidence they are the best we could have had, all the gilded parts being gilt in the picture, so that there can be no mistake or confusion of them with yellow color or light, and all the frescoes or mosaics given with the most absolute precision and fidelity. At the same time they are by no means examples of perfect architectural drawing ; there is little light and shade in them of any kind, and none whatever of the thoughtful observance of temporary effect of which we have just been speaking ; so that, in rendering the character of the relieved parts, their solidity, depth, or gloom, the representation fails altogether, and it is moreover lifeless from its very completion, both the signs of age and the effects of use and habitation being utterly rejected ; rightly so, indeed, in these instances, (all the architecture of these painters being in background to religious subject,) but wrongly so, if we look to the architecture alone. Neither is there anything like aerial perspective attempted ; the employment of actual gold in the decoration of all the distances, and the entire realization of their details, as far as is possible on the scale compelled by perspective, being alone sufficient to prevent this, except in the hands of painters far more practised in effect than either Gentile or Carpaccio. But with all these discrepancies, Gentile Bellini's church of St. Mark's is the best church of St. Mark's that has ever been painted, so far as I know ; and I believe the reconciliation of true aerial perspective and chiaroscuro with the splendor and dignity obtained by the real gilding and elaborate detail, is a problem yet to be accomplished. With the help of the Daguerreotype, and the lessons of color given by the later Venetians, we ought now to be able to accomplish it, more especially as the right use of gold has been shown us by the greatest master of effect whom Venice herself produced, Tintoret, who has employed it with infinite grace on the steps ascended by the young Madonna, in his large picture in the church of the Madonna dell' Orto. Perugino uses it also with singular grace, often employing it for golden light on distant trees, and continually on the high light of hair, and that without losing relative distances.

---

* I have not given any examples in this place, because it is difficult to explain such circumstances of effect without diagrams : I purpose entering into fuller discussion of the subject with the aid of illustration.

The great group of Venetian painters who brought landscape art, for that time, to its culminating point, have left, as we have already seen, little that is instructive in architectural painting. The causes of this I cannot comprehend, for neither Titian nor Tintoret appears to despise anything that affords them either variety of form or of color, the latter especially condescending to very trivial details,—as in the magnificent carpet painting of the Doge Mocenigo ; so that it might have been expected that in the rich colors of St. Mark's, and the magnificent and fantastic masses of the Byzantine palaces, they would have found whereupon to dwell with delighted elaboration. This is, however, never the case, and although frequently compelled to introduce portions of Venetian locality in their backgrounds, such portions are always treated in a most hasty and faithless manner, missing frequently all character of the building, and never advanced to realization. In Titian's picture of Faith, the view of Venice below is laid in so rapidly and slightly, the houses all leaning this way and that, and of no color, the sea a dead gray green, and the ship-sails mere dashes of the brush, that the most obscure of Turner's Venices would look substantial beside it ; while in the very picture of Tintoret in which he has dwelt so elaborately on the carpet, he has substituted a piece of ordinary renaissance composition for St. Mark's, and in the background has chosen the Sansovino side of the Piazzetta, treating even that so carelessly as to lose all the proportion and beauty of its design, and so flimsily that the line of the distant sea which has been first laid in, is seen through all the columns. Evidences of magnificent power of course exist in whatever he touches, but his full power is never turned in this direction. More space is allowed to his architecture by Paul Veronese, but it is still entirely suggestive, and would be utterly false except as a frame or background for figures. The same may be said with respect to Raffaelle and the Roman school.

§ 29. And of the Venetians generally.

If, however, these men laid architecture little under contribution to their own art, they made their own art a glorious gift to architecture, and the walls of Venice, which before, I believe, had received color only in arabesque patterns, were lighted with human life by Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese. Of the works of Tintoret and Titian, nothing now, I believe, remains; two figures of Giorgione's are still traceable on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, one of which, singularly uninjured, is seen from far above and below the Rialto, flaming like the reflection of a sunset. Two figures of Veronese were also traceable till lately, the head and arms of one still remain, and some glorious olive-branches which were beside the other; the figure having been entirely effaced by an inscription in large black letters on a whitewash tablet which we owe to the somewhat inopportunely expressed enthusiasm of the inhabitants of the district in favor of their new pastor.* Judging, however, from the rate at which destruction is at present advancing, and seeing that, in about seven or eight years more, Venice will have utterly lost every external claim to interest, except that which attaches to the group of buildings immediately around St. Mark's place, and to the larger churches, it may be conjectured that the greater part of her present degradation has taken place, at any rate, within the last forty years. Let the reader with such scraps of evidence as may still be gleaned from under the stucco and paint of the Italian committees of taste, and from

§ 30. Fresco painting of the Venetian exteriors. Canaletto.

---

* The inscription is to the following effect,—a pleasant thing to see upon the walls, were it but more innocently placed:—

CAMPO. DI. S. MAURIZIO

DIO
CONSERVI A NOI.
LUNGAMENTE
LO ZELANTIS. E. REVERENDIS
D. LUIGI. PICCINI.
NOSTRO
NOVELLO PIEVANO.

GLI ESULTANT.
PARROCCHIANI

among the drawing-room innovations of English and German residents restore Venice in his imagination to some resemblance of what she must have been before her fall. Let him, looking from Lido or Fusina, replace in the forest of towers those of the hundred and sixty-six churches which the French threw down ; let him sheet her walls with purple and scarlet, overlay her minarets with gold,* cleanse from their pollution those choked canals which are now the drains of hovels, where they were once vestibules of palaces, and fill them with gilded barges and bannered ships ; finally, let him withdraw from this scene, already so brilliant, such sadness and stain as had been set upon it by the declining energies of more than half a century, and he will see Venice as it was seen by Canaletto ; whose miserable, virtueless, heartless mechanism, accepted as the representation of such various glory, is, both in its existence and acceptance, among the most striking signs of the lost sensation and deadened intellect of the nation at that time ; a numbness and darkness more without hope than that of the grave itself, holding and wearing yet the sceptre and the crown like the corpses of the Etruscan kings, ready to sink into ashes at the first unbarring of the door of the sepulchre.

The mannerism of Canaletto is the most degraded that I know in the whole range of art. Professing the most servile and mindless imitation, it imitates nothing but the blackness of the shadows ; it gives no one single architectural ornament, however near, so much form as might enable us even to guess at its actual one ; and this I say not rashly, for I shall prove it by placing portions of detail accurately copied from Canaletto side by side with engravings from the Daguerreotype ; it gives the buildings neither their architectural beauty nor their ancestral dignity, for there is no texture of stone nor character of age in Canaletto's touch; which is invariably a violent, black, sharp, ruled penmanlike line, as far removed from the grace of nature as from her faintness and transparency; and for his truth of color, let the single fact of his having omitted *all record, whatsoever, of the frescoes* whose wrecks are still to be found at least on one half of the unrestored palaces, and, with still less excusableness, all record of the magnificent colored marbles of many whose greens and purples are still undimmed upon the Casa Dario, Casa Bianca Capello, and multitudes besides, speak for him in this respect.

---

* The quantity of gold with which the decorations of Venice were once covered could not now be traced or credited without reference to the authority of Gentile Bellini. The greater part of the marble mouldings have been touched with it in lines and points, the minarets of St. Mark's, and all the florid carving of the arches entirely sheeted. The Casa d'Oro retained it on its lions until the recent commencement of its Restoration.

Let it be observed that I find no fault with Canaletto, for his want of poetry, of feeling, of artistical thoughtfulness in treatment, or of the various other virtues which he does not so much as profess. He professes nothing but colored Daguerreotypeism. Let us have it: most precious and to be revered it would be: let us have fresco where fresco was, and that copied faithfully; let us have carving where carving is, and that architecturally true. I have seen Daguerreotypes in which every figure and rosette, and crack and stain, and fissure are given on a scale of an inch to Canaletto's three feet. What excuse is there to be offered for his omitting, on that scale, as I shall hereafter show, all statement of such ornament whatever? Among the Flemish schools, exquisite imitations of architecture are found constantly, and that not with Canaletto's vulgar, black exaggeration of shadow, but in the most pure and silvery and luminous grays. I have little pleasure in such pictures; but I blame not those who have more; they are what they profess to be, and they are wonderful and instructive, and often graceful, and even affecting, but Canaletto possesses no virtue except that of dexterous imitation of commonplace light and shade, and perhaps, with the exception of Salvator, no artist has ever fettered his unfortunate admirers more securely from all healthy or vigorous perception of truth, or been of more general detriment to all subsequent schools.

Neither, however, by the Flemings, nor by any other of the elder schools, was the effect of age or of human life upon architecture ever adequately expressed. What ruins they drew looked as if broken down on purpose, what weeds they put on seemed put on for ornament. Their domestic buildings had never any domesticity, the people looked out of their windows evidently to be drawn, or came into the streets only to stand there forever. A peculiar studiousness infected all accident; bricks fell out methodically, windows opened and shut by rule; stones were chipped at regular intervals; everything that happened seemed to have been expected before; and above all, the street had been washed and the houses dusted expressly to be painted in their best. We owe to Prout, I believe, the first perception, and certainly the only existing expression of precisely the characters which were wanting to old art, of that feeling which results from the influence among the noble lines of architecture, of the rent and the rust, the fissure, the lichen, and the weed, and from the writing upon the pages of ancient walls of the confused hieroglyphics of human history. I suppose, from the deserved popularity of the artist, that the strange pleasure which I find myself in the deciphering of these is common to many; the feeling has been rashly and thoughtlessly contemned as mere love of the picturesque; there is, as I have above shown, a deeper moral in it, and we owe much, I am not prepared to say how much, to the artist by whom pre-eminently it has been excited. For, numerous as have been his imitators, extended as his influence, and simple as his means and manner, there has yet appeared nothing at all to equal him; there is *no* stone drawing, *no* vitality of architecture like Prout's. I say not this rashly, I have Mackenzie in my eye and many other capital imitators; and I have carefully reviewed the Architectural work of the Academicians, often most accurate and elaborate. I repeat, there is nothing but the work of Prout which is true, living, or right in its general impression, and nothing, therefore, so inexhaustibly agreeable. Faults he has, manifold, easily

§ 31. Expression of the effects of age on architecture by S. Prout.

detected, and much declaimed against by second-rate artists; but his excellence no one has ever touched, and his lithographic work, (Sketches in Flanders and Germany,) which was, I believe, the first of the kind, still remains the most valuable of all, numerous and elaborate as its various successors have been. The second series (in Italy and Switzerland) was of less value, the drawings seemed more laborious, and had less of the life of the original sketches, being also for the most part of subjects less adapted for the development of the artist's peculiar powers; but both are fine, and the Brussels, Louvain, Cologne, and Nuremberg, subjects of the one, together with the Tours, Amboise, Geneva, and Sion, of the other, exhibit substantial qualities of stone and wood drawing, together with an ideal appreciation of the present active vital being of the cities, such as nothing else has ever approached. Their value is much increased by the circumstance of their being drawn by the artist's own hand upon the stone, and by the consequent manly recklessness of subordinate parts, (in works of this kind, be it remembered, much *is* subordinate,) which is of all characters of execution the most refreshing. Note the scrawled middle tint of the wall behind the Gothic well at Ratisbonne, and compare this manly piece of work with the wretched smoothness of recent lithography. Let it not be thought that there is any inconsistency between what I say here and what I have said respecting finish. This piece of dead wall is as much finished in relation to its *function* as a wall of Ghirlandajo's or Leonardo's in relation to theirs, and the refreshing quality is the same in both, and manifest in *all* great masters, without exception, that of the utter regardlessness of the means so that their end be reached. The same kind of scrawling occurs often in the shade of Raffaelle.

§ 32. His excellent composition and color.

It is not only, however, by his peculiar stone touch nor perception of human character that he is distinguished. He is the most dexterous of all our artists in a certain kind of composition. No one can place figures like him, except Turner. It is one thing to know where a piece of blue or white is wanted, and another to make the wearer of the blue apron or white cap come there, and not look as if it were against her will. Prout's streets are the only streets that are accidentally crowded, his markets are the only markets where one feels inclined to get out of the way. With others we feel the figures so right where they are, that we have no expectation of their going anywhere else, and approve of the position of the man with the wheelbarrow, without the slightest fear of his running against our legs. One other merit he has, far less generally acknowledged than it should be: he is among our most sunny and substantial colorists. Much conventional color occurs in his inferior pictures (for he is very unequal) and some in all; but portions are always to be found of quality so luminous and pure that I have found these works the only ones capable of bearing juxtaposition with Turner and Hunt, who invariably destroy everything else that comes within range of them. His most beautiful tones occur in those drawings in which there is prevalent and powerful warm gray, his most failing ones in those of sandy red. On his deficiencies I shall not insist, because I am not prepared to say how far it is possible for him to avoid them. We have never seen the reconciliation of the peculiar characters he has obtained with the accurate following out of architectural detail. With his present modes of execution, farther fidelity is impossible, nor has any other mode of execution yet obtained the same results; and though much is unaccomplished by him in certain subjects, and something of over-mannerism may be traced in his treatment of others, as especially in his mode of expressing the decorative parts of Greek or Roman architecture, yet in his own peculiar Gothic territory, where the spirit of the subject itself is somewhat rude and grotesque, his abstract of decoration has more of the spirit of the reality than far more laborious imitation. The spirit of the Flemish Hotel de Ville and decorated street architecture has never been even in the slightest degree felt or conveyed except by him, and by him, to my mind, faultlessly and absolutely; and though his interpretation of architecture that contains more refined art in its details is far less satisfactory, still it is impossible, while walking on his favorite angle of the Piazzetta at Venice, either to think of any other artist than Prout or *not* to think of *him*.

§ 33. Modern architectural painting generally. G. Cattermole.

Many other dexterous and agreeable architectural artists we have of various degrees of merit, but of all of whom, it may be generally said, that they draw hats, faces, cloaks, and caps much better than Prout, but figures not so well; that they draw walls and windows but not cities, mouldings and buttresses but not cathedrals. Joseph Nash's work on the architecture of the middle ages is, however, valuable, and I suppose that Haghe's works may be depended on for fidelity. But it appears very strange that a workman capable of producing the clever drawings he has, from time to time, sent to the New Society of Painters in Water Colors, should publish lithographs so conventional, forced, and lifeless.

It is not without hesitation, that I mention a name respecting which the reader may already have been surprised at my silence, that of G. Cattermole. There are signs in his works of very peculiar gifts, and perhaps also of powerful genius; their deficiencies I should willingly attribute to the advice of ill-judging friends, and to the applause of a public satisfied with shallow efforts, if brilliant; yet I cannot but think it one necessary characteristic of all true genius to be misled by no such false fires. The Antiquarian feeling of Cattermole is pure, earnest, and natural; and I think his imagination originally vigorous, certainly his fancy, his grasp of momentary passion considerable, his sense of action in the human body vivid and ready. But no original talent, however brilliant, can sustain its energy when the demands upon it are constant, and all legitimate support and food withdrawn. I do not recollect in any, even of the most important of Cattermole's works, so much as a fold of drapery studied out from nature. Violent conventionalism of light and shade, sketchy forms continually less and less developed, the walls and the faces drawn with the same stucco color, alike opaque, and all the shades on flesh, dress, or stone, laid in with the same arbitrary brown, forever tell the same tale of a mind wasting its strength and substance in the production of emptiness, and seeking, by more and more blindly hazarded handling, to conceal the weakness which the attempt at finish would betray.

This tendency of late, has been painfully visible in his architecture. Some drawings made several years ago for an annual illustrative of Scott's works were for the most part pure and finely felt—(though irrelevant to our present subject, a fall of the Clyde should be noticed, admirable for breadth and grace of foliage, and for the bold sweeping of the water, and another subject of which I regret that I can only judge by the engraving ; Glendearg at twilight—the monk Eustace chased by Christie of the Clint Hill—which I think must have been one of the sweetest pieces of simple Border hill feeling ever painted)—and about that time his architecture, though always conventionally brown in the shadows, was generally well drawn, and always powerfully conceived.

Since then, he has been tending gradually through exaggeration to caricature, and vainly endeavoring to attain by inordinate bulk of decorated parts, that dignity which is only to be reached by purity of proportion and majesty of line.

§ 34. The evil in an archæological point of view of misapplied invention in architectural subject.

It has pained me deeply, to see an artist of so great original power indulging in childish fantasticism and exaggeration, and substituting for the serious and subdued work of legitimate imagination, monster machicolations and colossal cusps and crockets. While there is so much beautiful architecture daily in process of destruction around us, I cannot but think it treason to *imagine* anything ; at least, if we must have composition, let the design of the artist be such as the architect would applaud. But it is surely very grievous, that while our idle artists are helping their vain inventions by the fall of sponges on soiled paper, glorious buildings with the whole intellect and history of centuries concentrated in them, are suffered to fall into unrecorded ruin. A day does not now pass in Italy without the destruction of some mighty monument ;

the streets of all her cities echo to the hammer, half of her fair buildings lie in separate stones about the places of their foundation; would not time be better spent in telling us the truth about these perishing remnants of majestic thought, than in perpetuating the ill-digested fancies of idle hours? It is, I repeat, treason to the cause of art for any man to invent, unless he invents something better than has been invented before, or something differing in kind. There is room enough for invention in the pictorial treatment of what exists. There is no more honorable exhibition of imaginative power, than in the selection of such place, choice of such treatment, introduction of such incident, as may produce a noble picture without deviation from one line of the actual truth; and such I believe to be, indeed, in the end the most advantageous, as well as the most modest direction of the invention, for I recollect no single instance of architectural composition by any men except such as Leonardo or Veronese, who could design their architecture thoroughly before they painted it, which has not a look of inanity and absurdity. The best landscapes and the best architectural studies have been views; and I would have the artist take shame to himself in the exact degree in which he finds himself obliged in the production of his picture to lose any, even of the smallest parts or most trivial hues which bear a part in the great impression made by the reality. The difference between the drawing of the architect and artist * ought never to be, as it now commonly is, the difference between lifeless formality and witless license; it ought to be between giving the mere lines and measures of a building, and giving those lines and measures with the impression and soul of it besides. All artists should be ashamed of themselves when they find they have not the power of being true; the right wit of drawing is like the right wit of conversation, not hyperbole, not violence, not frivolity, only well expressed, laconic truth.

Among the members of the Academy, we have at present

---

* Indeed there should be no such difference at all. Every architect ought to be an artist; every very great artist is necessarily an architect.

only one professedly architectural draughtsman of note, David Roberts, whose reputation is probably farther extended on the continent than that of any other of our artists, except Landseer. I am not certain, however, that I have any reason to congratulate either of my countrymen upon this their European estimation; for I think it exceedingly probable that in both instances it is exclusively based on their defects; and in the case of Mr. Roberts, in particular, there has of late appeared more ground for it than is altogether desirable in a smoothness and over-finish of texture which bears dangerous fellowship with the work of our Gallic neighbors.

§ 35. Works of David Roberts: their fidelity and grace.

The fidelity of intention and honesty of system of Roberts have, however, always been meritorious; his drawing of architecture is dependent on no unintelligible lines, or blots, or substituted types: the main lines of the real design are always there, and its hollowness and undercuttings given with exquisite feeling; his sense of solidity of form is very peculiar, leading him to dwell with great delight on the roundings of edges and angles; his execution is dexterous and delicate, singularly so in oil, and his sense of chiaroscuro refined. But he has never done himself justice, and suffers his pictures to fall below the rank they should assume, by the presence of several marring characters, which I shall name, because it is perfectly in his power to avoid them. In looking over the valuable series of drawing of the Holy Land, which we owe to Mr. Roberts, we cannot but be amazed to find how frequently it has happened that there was something very white immediately in the foreground, and something very black exactly behind it. The same thing happens perpetually with Mr. Roberts's pictures; a white column is always coming out of a blue mist, or a white stone out of a green pool, or a white monument out of a brown recess, and the artifice is not always concealed with dexterity. This is unworthy of so skilful a composer, and it has destroyed the impressiveness as well as the color of some of his finest works. It shows a poverty of conception, which appears to me to arise from a deficient habit of study. It will be remembered that of the sketches for this work, several times exhibited in London, every one was executed in the same manner, and with about the same degree of completion : being all of them accurate records of the main architectural lines, the shapes of the shadows, and the remnants of artificial color, obtained, by means of the same grays, throughout, and of the same yellow (a singularly false and cold though convenient color) touched upon the lights. As far as they went, nothing could be more valuable than these sketches, and the public, glancing rapidly at their general and graceful effects, could hardly form anything like an estimate of the endurance and determination which must have been necessary in such a climate to obtain records so patient, entire, and clear, of details so multitudinous as (especially) the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian temples ; an endurance which perhaps only artists can estimate, and for which we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Roberts most difficult to discharge. But if these sketches were all that the artist brought home, whatever value is to be attached to them as statements of fact, they are altogether insufficient for the producing of pictures. I saw among them no single instance of a downright study ; of a study in which the real hues and shades of sky and earth had been honestly realized or attempted ; nor were there, on the other hand, any of those invaluable-blotted-five-minutes works which record the unity of some single and magnificent impressions. Hence the pictures which have been painted from these sketches have been as much alike in their want of impressiveness as the sketches themselves, and have never borne the living aspect of the Egyptian light ; it has always been impossible to say whether the red in them (not a pleasant one) was meant for hot sunshine or for red sandstone—their power has been farther destroyed by the necessity the artist seems to feel himself under of eking out their effect by points of bright foreground color, and thus we have been encumbered with caftans, pipes, scymetars, and black hair, when all that we wanted was a lizard, or an ibis. It is perhaps owing to this want of earnestness in study rather than to deficiency of perception, that the coloring of this artist is commonly untrue. Some time ago when he was painting Spanish subjects, his habit was to bring out his whites in relief from transparent bituminous browns, which though not exactly right in color, were at any rate warm and agreeable ; but of late his color has become cold, waxy, and opaque, and in his deep shades he sometimes permits himself the use of a violent black which is altogether unjustifiable. A picture of Roslin Chapel exhibited in 1844, showed this defect in the recess to which the stairs descend, in an extravagant degree ; and another exhibited in the British Institution, instead of showing the exquisite crumbling and lichenous texture of the Roslin stone, was polished to as vapid smoothness as ever French historical picture. The general feebleness of the effect is increased by the insertion of the figures as violent pieces of local color unaffected by the light and unblended with the hues around them, and bearing evidence of having been painted from models or draperies in the dead light of a room instead of sunshine. On these deficiencies I should not have remarked, but that by honest and determined painting from and of nature, it is perfectly in the power of the artist to supply them ; and it is bitterly to be regretted that the accuracy and elegance of his work should not be aided by that genuineness of hue and effect which can only be given by the uncompromising effort to paint not a fine picture but an impressive and known *verity*.

The two artists whose works it remains for us to review, are men who have presented us with examples of the treatment of every kind of subject, and among the rest with portions of architecture which the best of our exclusively architectural draughtsmen could not excel.

§ 36. Clarkson Stanfield.

The frequent references made to the works of Clarkson Stanfield throughout the subsequent pages render it less necessary for me to speak of him here at any length. He is the leader of the English Realists, and perhaps among the more remarkable of his characteristics is the look of common-sense and rationality which his compositions will always bear when opposed to any kind of affectation. He appears to think of no other artist. What he has learned, has been from his own acquaintance with and affection for the steep hills and the deep sea ; and his modes of treatment are alike removed from sketchiness or incompletion, and from exaggeration or effort. The somewhat over-prosaic tone of his subjects is rather a condescension to what he supposes to be public feeling, than a sign of want of feeling in himself ; for in some of his sketches from nature or from fancy, I have seen powers and perceptions manifested of a far higher order than any that are traceable in his Academy works, powers which I think him much to be blamed for checking. The portion of his pictures usually most defective in this respect is the sky, which is apt to be cold and uninventive, always well drawn, but with a kind of hesitation in the clouds whether it is to be fair or foul weather ; they having neither the joyfulness of rest, nor the majesty of storm. Their color is apt also to verge on a morbid purple, as was eminently the case in the large picture of the wreck on the coast of Holland exhibited in 1844, a work in which both his powers and faults were prominently manifested, the picture being full of good painting, but wanting in its entire appeal. There was no feeling of wreck about it ; and, but for the damage about her bowsprit, it would have been impossible for a landsman to say whether the hull was meant for a wreck or a guardship. Nevertheless, it is always to be recollected, that in subjects of this kind it is probable that much escapes us in consequence of our want of knowledge, and that to the eye of the seaman much may be of interest and value which to us appears cold. At all events, this healthy and rational regard of things is incomparably preferable to the dramatic absurdities which weaker artists commit in matters marine ; and from copper-colored sunsets on green waves sixty feet high, with cauliflower breakers, and ninepin rocks ; from drowning on planks, and starving on rafts, and lying naked on beaches, it is really refreshing to turn to a surge of Stanfield's true salt, serviceable, unsentimental sea. It would be well, however, if he would sometimes take a higher flight. The castle of Ischia gave him a grand subject, and a little more invention in the sky, a little less muddiness in the rocks, and a little more savageness in the sea, would have made it an impressive picture; it just misses the sublime, yet is a fine work, and better engraved than usual by the Art Union.

One fault we cannot but venture to find, even in our own extreme ignorance, with Mr. Stanfield's boats; they never look weather-beaten. There is something peculiarly precious in the rusty, dusty, tar-trickled, fishy, phosphorescent brown of an old boat, and when this has just dipped under a wave and rises to the sunshine it is enough to drive Giorgione to despair. I have never seen any effort at this by Stanfield; his boats always look new painted and clean; witness especally the one before the ship in the wreck picture above noticed; and there is some such absence of a right sense of color in other portions of his subject; even his fishermen have always clean jackets and unsoiled caps, and his very rocks are lichenless. And, by the way, this ought to be noted respecting modern painters in general, that they have not a proper sense of the value of dirt; cottage children never appear but in fresh got-up caps and aprons, and white-handed beggars excite compassion in unexceptionable rags. In reality, almost all the colors of things associated with human life derive something of their expression and value from the tones of impurity, and so enhance the value of the entirely pure tints of nature herself. Of Stanfield's rock and mountain drawing enough will be said hereafter. His foliage is inferior; his architecture admirably drawn, but commonly wanting in color. His picture of the Doge's palace at Venice was quite clay-cold and untrue. Of late he has shown a marvellous predilection for the realization, even to actually relieved texture, of old worm-eaten wood; we trust he will not allow such fancies to carry him too far.

The name I have last to mention is that of J. M. W. Turner. I do not intend to speak of this artist at present in general terms, because my constant practice throughout this work is to say, when I speak of an artist at all, the very truth of what I believe and feel respecting him; and the truth of what I believe and feel respecting Turner would appear in this place, unsupported by any proof, mere rhapsody. I shall therefore here confine myself to a rapid glance at the relations of his past and present works, and to some notice of what he has failed of accomplishing: the greater part of the subsequent chapters will be exclusively devoted to the examination of the new fields over which he has extended the range of landscape art.

§ 37. J. M. W. Turner. Force of national feeling in all great painters.

It is a fact more universally acknowledged than enforced or acted upon, that all great painters, of whatever school, have been great only in their rendering of what they had seen and felt from early childhood; and that the greatest among them have been the most frank in acknowledging this their inability to treat anything successfully but that with which they had been famılar. The Madonna of Raffaelle was born on the Urbino mountains, Ghirlandajo's is a Florentine, Bellini's a Venetian; there is not the slightest effort on the part of any one of these great men to paint her as a Jewess. It is not the place here to insist farther on a point so simple and so universally demonstrable. Expression, character, types of countenance, costume, color, and accessories are with all great painters whatsoever those of their native land, and that frankly and entirely, without the slightest attempt at modification; and I assert fearlessly that it is impossible that it should ever be otherwise, and that no man ever painted or ever will paint well anything but what he has early and long seen, early and long felt, and early and long loved. How far it is possible for the mind of one nation or generation to be healthily modified and taught by the work of another, I presume not to determine; but it depends upon whether the energy of the mind which receives the instruction be sufficient, while it takes out of what it feeds upon that which is universal and common to all nature, to resist all warping from national or temporary peculiarities. Nino Pisano got nothing but good, the modern French nothing but evil, from the study of the antique; but Nino Pisano had a God and a character. All artists who have attempted to assume, or in their weakness have been affected by, the national peculiarities of other times and countries, have instantly, whatever their original power, fallen to third-rate rank, or fallen altogether, and have invariably lost their birthright and blessing, lost their power over the human heart, lost all capability of teaching or benefiting others. Compare the hybrid classification of Wilson with the rich English purity of Gainsborough ; compare the recent exhibition of middle-age cartoons for the Houses of Parliament with the works of Hogarth ; compare the sickly modern German imitations of the great Italians with Albert Durer and Holbein ; compare the vile classicality of Canova and the modern Italians with Mino da Fiesole, Luca della Robbia, and Andrea del Verrocchio. The manner of Nicolo Poussin is said to be Greek—it may be so ; this only I know, that it is heartless and profitless. The severity of the rule, however, extends not in full force to the nationality, but only to the visibility of things ; for it is very possible for an artist of powerful mind to throw himself well into the feeling of foreign nations of his own time. Thus John Lewis has been eminently successful in his seizing of Spanish character. Yet it may be doubted if the seizure be such as Spaniards themselves would acknowledge ; it is probably of the habits of the people more than their hearts ; continued efforts of this kind, especially if their subjects be varied, assuredly end in failure ; Lewis, who seemed so eminently penetrative in Spain, sent nothing from Italy but complexions and costumes, and I expect no good from his stay in Egypt. English artists are usually entirely ruined by residence in Italy, but for this there are collateral causes which it is not here the place to examine. Be this as it may, and whatever success may be attained in pictures of slight and unpretending aim, of genre, as they are called, in the rendering of foreign character, of this I am certain, that whatever is to be truly great and affecting must have on it the strong stamp of the native land ; not a law this, but a necessity, from the intense hold on their country of the affections of all truly great men ; all classicality, all middle-age patent reviving, is utterly vain and absurd ; if we are now to do anything great, good, awful, religious, it must be got out of our own little island, and out of this year 1846, railroads and all : if a British painter, I say this in earnest seriousness, cannot make historical characters out of the British House of Peers, he cannot paint history; and if he cannot make a Madonna of a British girl of the nineteenth century, he cannot paint one at all.

§ 38. Influence of this feeling on the choice of Landscape subject.

The rule, of course, holds in landscape; yet so far less authoritatively, that the material nature of all countries and times is in many points actually, and in all, in principle, the same; so that feelings educated in Cumberland, may find their food in Switzerland, and impressions first received among the rocks of Cornwall, be recalled upon the precipices of Genoa. Add to this actual sameness, the power of every great mind to possess itself of the spirit of things once presented to it, and it is evident, that little limitation can be set to the landscape painter as to the choice of his field; and that the law of nationality will hold with him only so far as a certain joyfulness and completion will be by preference found in those parts of his subject which remind him of his own land. But if he attempt to impress on his landscapes any other spirit than that he has felt, and to make them landscapes of other times, it is all over with him, at least, in the degree in which such reflected moonshine takes place of the genuine light of the present day.

The reader will at once perceive how much trouble this simple principle will save both the painter and the critic; it at once sets aside the whole school of common composition, and exonerates us from the labor of minutely examining any landscape which has nymphs or philosophers in it.

It is hardly necessary for us to illustrate this principle by any reference to the works of early landscape painters, as I suppose it is universally acknowledged with respect to them; Titian being the most remarkable instance of the influence of the native air on a strong mind, and Claude, of that of the classical poison on a weak one; but it is very necessary to keep it in mind in reviewing the works of our great modern landscape painter.

I do not know in what district of England Turner first or longest studied, but the scenery whose influence I can trace most definitely throughout his works, varied as they are, is that of Yorkshire. Of all his drawings, I think, those of the Yorkshire series have the most heart in them, the most affectionate, simple, unwearied, serious finishing of truth. There is in them little seeking after effect, but a strong love of place, little exhibition of the artist's own powers or peculiarities, but intense appreciation of the smallest local minutiæ. These drawings have unfortunately changed hands frequently, and have been abused and ill-treated by picture dealers and cleaners ; the greater number of them are now mere wrecks. I name them not as instances, but as proofs of the artist's study in this district ; for the affection to which they owe their excellence, must have been grounded long years before. It is to be traced, not only in these drawings of the places themselves, but in the peculiar love of the painter for rounded forms of hills ; not but that he is right in this on general principles, for I doubt not, that, with his peculiar feeling for beauty of line, his hills would have been rounded still, even if he had studied first among the peaks of Cadore ; but rounded to the same extent and with the same delight in their roundness, they would not have been. It is, I believe, to those broad wooded steeps and swells of the Yorkshire downs that we in part owe the singular massiveness that prevails in Turner's mountain drawing, and gives it one of its chief elements of grandeur. Let the reader open the Liber Studiorum, and compare the painter's enjoyment of the lines in the Ben Arthur, with his comparative uncomfortableness among those of the aiguilles about the Mer de Glace. Great as he is, those peaks would have been touched very differently by a Savoyard as great as he.

§ 39. Its peculiar manifestation in Turner.

I am in the habit of looking to the Yorkshire drawings, as indicating one of the culminating points in Turner's career. In these he attained the highest degree of what he had up to that time attempted, namely, finish and quantity of form united with expression of atmosphere, and light without color. His early drawings are singularly instructive in this definiteness and simplicity of aim. No complicated or brilliant color is ever thought of in them; they are little more than exquisite studies in light and shade, very green blues being used for the shadows, and golden browns for the lights. The difficulty and treachery of color being thus avoided, the artist was able to bend his whole mind upon the drawing, and thus to attain such decision, delicacy, and completeness as have never in any wise been equalled, and as might serve him for a secure foundation in all after experiments. Of the quantity and precision of his details, the drawings made for Hakewill's Italy are singular examples. The most perfect gem in execution is a little bit on the Rhine, with reeds in the foreground, in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham; but the Yorkshire drawings seem to be on the whole the most noble representatives of his art at this period.

About the time of their production, the artist seems to have felt that he had done either all that could be done, or all that was necessary, in that manner, and began to reach after something beyond it. The element of color begins to mingle with his work, and in the first efforts to reconcile his intense feeling for it with his careful form, several anomalies begin to be visible, and some unfortunate or uninteresting works necessarily belong to the period. The England drawings, which are very characteristic of it, are exceedingly unequal,—some, as the Oakhampton, Kilgarren, Alnwick, and Llanthony, being among his finest works; others, as the Windsor from Eton, the Eton College, and the Bedford, showing coarseness and conventionality.

I do not know at what time the painter first went abroad, but among the earliest of the series of the Liber Studiorum (dates 1808, 1809) occur the magnificent Mont St. Gothard, and little Devil's Bridge. Now it is remarkable that after his acquaintance with this scenery, so congenial in almost all respects with the energy of his mind, and supplying him with materials of which in these two subjects, and in the Chartreuse, and several others afterwards, he showed both his entire appreciation and com-

§ 40. The domestic subjects of the Liber Studiorum.

mand, the proportion of English to foreign subjects should in the rest of the work be more than two to one ; and that those English subjects should be—many of them—of a kind peculiarly simple, and of every-day occurrence, such as the Pembury Mill, the Farm Yard Composition with the White Horse, that with the Cocks and Pigs, Hedging and Ditching, Watercress Gatherers (scene at Twickenham,) and the beautiful and solemn rustic subject called a Watermill ; and that the architectural subjects instead of being taken, as might have been expected of an artist so fond of treating effects of extended space, from some of the enormous continental masses, are almost exclusively British ; Rivaulx, Holy Island, Dumblain, Dunstanborough, Chesptow, St. Cathèrine's, Greenwich Hospital, an English Parish Church, a Saxon Ruin, and an exquisite Reminiscence of the English Lowland Castle in the pastoral, with the brook, wooden bridge, and wild duck, to all of which we have nothing foreign to oppose but three slight, ill-considered, and unsatisfactory subjects, from Basle, Lauffenbourg, and another Swiss village ; and, further, not only is the preponderance of subject British, but of affection also ; for it is strange with what fulness and completion the home subjects are treated in comparison with the greater part of the foreign ones. Compare the figures and sheep in the Hedging and Ditching, and the East gate Winchelsea, together with the near leafage, with the puzzled foreground and inappropriate figures of the Lake of Thun ; or the cattle and road of the St. Catherine's Hill, with the foreground of the Bonneville ; or the exquisite figure with the sheaf of corn, in the Watermill, with the vintages of the Grenoble subject.

In his foliage the same predilections are remarkable. Reminiscences of English willows by the brooks, and English forest glades mingle even with the heroic foliage of the Æsacus and Hesperie, and the Cephalus ; into the pine, whether of Switzerland or the glorious Stone, he cannot enter, or enters at his peril, like Ariel. Those of the Valley of Chamounix are fine masses, better pines than other people's, but not a bit like pines for all that ; he feels his weakness, and tears them off the distant mountains with the mercilessness of an avalanche. The Stone pines of the two Italian compositions are fine in their arrangement, but they are very pitiful pines ; the glory of the Alpine rose he never touches ; he munches chestnuts with no relish ; never has learned to like olives ; and, by the vine, we find him in the foreground of the Grenoble Alps laid utterly and incontrovertibly on his back.

I adduce these evidences of Turner's nationality (and innumerable others might be given if need were) not as proofs of weakness but of power ; not so much as testifying want of perception in foreign lands, as strong hold on his own will ; for I am sure that no artist who has not this hold upon his own will ever get good out of any other. Keeping this principle in mind, it is instructive to observe the depth and solemnity which Turner's feeling received from the scenery of the continent, the keen appreciation up to a certain point of all that is locally characteristic, and the ready seizure for future use of all valuable material.

§ 41. Turner's painting of French and Swiss landscape. The latter deficient.

Of all foreign countries he has most entirely entered into the spirit of France ; partly because here he found more fellowship of scene with his own England, partly because an amount of thought which will miss of Italy or Switzerland, will fathom France ; partly because there is in the French foliage and forms of ground, much that is especially congenial with his own peculiar choice of form. To what cause it is owing I cannot tell, nor is it generally allowed or felt ; but of the fact I am certain, that for grace of stem and perfection of form in their transparent foliage, the French trees are altogether unmatched ; and their modes of grouping and massing are so perfectly and constantly beautiful that I think of all countries for educating an artist to the perception of grace, France bears the bell ; and that not romantic nor mountainous France, not the Vosges, nor Auvergne, nor Provence, but lowland France, Picardy and Normandy, the valleys of the Loire and Seine, and even the district, so thoughtlessly and mindlessly abused by English travellers, as uninteresting, traversed between Calais and Dijon ; of which there is not a single valley but is full of the most lovely pictures, nor a mile from which the artist may not receive instruction ; the district immediately about Sens being perhaps the most valuable from the grandeur of its lines of poplars and the unimaginable finish and beauty of the tree forms in the two great avenues without the walls. Of this kind of beauty Turner was the first to take cognizance, and he still remains the only, but in himself the sufficient painter of French landscape. One of the most beautiful examples is the drawing of trees engraved for the Keepsake, now in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq.; the drawings made to illustrate the scenery of the Rivers of France supply instances of the most varied character.

The artist appears, until very lately, rather to have taken from Switzerland thoughts and general conceptions of size and of grand form and effect to be used in his after compositions, than to have attempted the seizing of its actual character. This was beforehand to be expected from the utter physical impossibility of rendering certain effects of Swiss scenery, and the monotony and unmanageableness of others. The Valley of Chamounix in the collection of Walter Fawkes, Esq., I have never seen ; it has a high reputation ; the Hannibal passing the Alps in its present state exhibits nothing but a heavy shower and a crowd of people getting wet ; another picture in the artist's gallery of a land-fall is most masterly and interesting, but more daring than agreeable. The Snow-storm, avalanche, and inundation, is one of his mightiest works, but the amount of mountain drawing in it is less than of cloud and effect ; the subjects in the Liber Studiorum are on the whole the most intensely felt, and next to them the vignettes to Rogers's Poems and Italy. Of some recent drawings of Swiss subject I shall speak presently.

§ 42. His rendering of Italian character still less successful. His large compositions how failing.

The effect of Italy upon his mind is very puzzling. On the one hand, it gave him the solemnity and power which are manifested in the historical compositions of the Liber Studiorum, more especially the Rizpah, the

Cephalus, the scene from the Fairy Queen, and the Æsacus and Hesperie: on the other, he seems never to have entered thoroughly into the spirit of Italy, and the materials he obtained there were afterwards but awkwardly introduced in his large compositions.

Of these there are very few at all worthy of him; none but the Liber Studiorum subjects are thoroughly great, and these are great because there is in them the seriousness without the materials of other countries and times. There is nothing particularly indicative of Palestine in the Barley Harvest of the Rizpah, nor in those round and awful trees; only the solemnity of the south in the lifting of the near burning moon. The rocks of the Jason may be seen in any quarry of Warwickshire sandstone. Jason himself has not a bit of Greek about him—he is a simple warrior of no period in particular, nay, I think there is something of the nineteenth century about his legs. When local character of this classical kind is attempted, the painter is visibly cramped: awkward resemblances to Claude testify the want of his usual forceful originality: in the tenth Plague of Egypt, he makes us think of Belzoni rather than of Moses; the fifth is a total failure, the pyramids look like brick-kilns, and the fire running along the ground bears brotherly resemblance to the burning of manure. The realization of the tenth plague now in his gallery is finer than the study, but still uninteresting; and of the large compositions which have much of Italy in them, the greater part are overwhelmed with quantity and deficient in emotion. The Crossing the Brook is one of the best of these hybrid pictures; incomparable in its tree-drawing, it yet leaves us doubtful where we are to look and what we are to feel; it is northern in its color, southern in its foliage, Italy in its details, and England in its sensations, without the grandeur of the one, or the healthiness of the other.

The two Carthages are mere rationalizations of Claude, one of them excessively bad in color, the other a grand thought, and yet one of the kind which does no one any good, because everything in it is reciprocally sacrificed; the foliage is sacrificed to the architecture, the architecture to the water, the water is neither sea, nor river, nor lake, nor brook, nor canal, and savors of Regent's Park ; the foreground is uncomfortable ground,—let on building leases. So the Caligula's Bridge, Temple of Jupiter, Departure of Regulus, Ancient Italy, Cicero's Villa, and such others, come they from whose hand they may, I class under the general head of "nonsense pictures." There never can be any wholesome feeling developed in these preposterous accumulations, and where the artist's feeling fails, his art follows ; so that the worst possible examples of Turner's color are found in pictures of this class ; in one or two instances he has broken through the conventional rules, and then is always fine, as in the Hero and Leander ; but in general the picture rises in value as it approaches to a view, as the Fountain of Fallacy, a piece of rich northern Italy, with some fairy waterworks ; this picture was unrivalled in color once, but is now a mere wreck. So the Rape of Proserpine, though it is singular that in his Academy pictures even his simplicity fails of reaching ideality ; in this picture of Proserpine the nature is not the grand nature of all time, it is indubitably modern,* and we are perfectly electrified at anybody's being carried away in the corner except by people with spiky hats and carabines. This is traceable to several causes ; partly to the want of any grand specific form, partly to the too evident middle-age character of the ruins crowning the hills, and to a multiplicity of minor causes which we cannot at present enter into.

Neither in his actual views of Italy has Turner ever caught her true spirit, except in the little vignettes to Rogers's Poems. The Villa of Galileo, the nameless composition with stone pines, the several villa moonlights, and the convent compositions in the Voyage of Columbus, are altogether exquisite; but this is owing chiefly to their simplicity and perhaps in some measure to their smallness of size. None of his large pictures at all equal them; the Bay of Baiae is encumbered with material, it contains ten times as much as is necessary to a good picture, and yet is so crude in color as to look unfinished. The Palestrina is full of raw white, and has a look of Hampton Court about its long avenue; the modern Italy is purely English in its near foliage; it is composed from Tivoli material enriched and arranged most dexterously, but it has the look of a rich arrangement, and not the virtue of the real thing. The early Tivoli, a large drawing taken from below the falls, was as little true, and still less fortunate, the trees there being altogether affected and artificial. The Florence engraved in the Keepsake is a glorious drawing, as far as regards the passage with the bridge and sunlight on the Arno, the Cascine foliage, and distant plain, and the towers of the fortress on the left; but the details of the duomo and the city are entirely missed, and with them the majesty of the whole scene. The vines and melons of the foreground are disorderly, and its cypresses conventional; in fact, I recollect no instance of Turner's drawing a cypress except in general terms.

---

* This passage seems at variance with what has been said of the necessity of painting present times and objects. It is not so. A great painter makes out of that which he finds before him something which is independent of *all* time. He can only do this out of the materials ready to his hand, but that which he builds has the dignity of dateless age. A little painter is annihilated by an anachronism, and is conventionally antique, and involuntarily modern.

§ 43. His views of Italy destroyed by brilliancy and redundant quantity.

The chief reason of these failures I imagine to be the effort of the artist to put joyousness and brilliancy of effect upon scenes eminently pensive, to substitute radiance for serenity of light, and to force the freedom and breadth of line which he learned to love on English downs and Highland moors, out of a country dotted by campaniles and square convents, bristled with cypresses, partitioned by walls, and gone up and down by steps.

In one of the cities of Italy he had no such difficulties to encounter. At Venice he found freedom of space, brilliancy of light, variety of color, massy simplicity of general form; and to Venice we owe many of the motives in which his highest powers of color have been displayed after that change in his system of which we must now take note.

Among the earlier paintings of Turner, the culminating period, marked by the Yorkshire series in his drawings, is distinguished by great solemnity and simplicity of subject, prevalent gloom in light and shade, and brown in the hue, the drawing manly but careful, the minutiæ sometimes exquisitely delicate. All the finest works of this period are, I believe, without exception, views, or quiet single thoughts. The Calder Bridge, belonging to E. Bicknell, Esq., is a most pure and beautiful example. The Ivy Bridge I imagine to be later, but its rock foreground is altogether unrivalled and remarkable for its delicacy of detail; a butterfly is seen settled on one of the large brown stones in the midst of the torrent. Two paintings of Bonneville, in Savoy, one in the possession of Abel Allnutt, Esq., the other, and, I think, the finest, in a collection at Birmingham, show more variety of color than is usual with him at the period, and are in every respect magnificent examples. Pictures of this class are of peculiar value, for the larger compositions of the same period are all poor in color, and most of them much damaged, but the smaller works have been far finer originally, and their color seems secure. There is nothing in the range of landscape art equal to them in their way, but the full character and capacity of the painter is not in them. Grand as they are in their sobriety, they still leave much to be desired; there is great heaviness in their shadows, the material is never thoroughly vanquished, (though this partly for a very noble reason, that the painter is always thinking of and referring to nature, and indulges in no artistical conventionalities,) and sometimes the handling appears feeble. In warmth, lightness, and transparency they have no chance against Gainsborough; in clear skies and air tone they are alike unfortunate when they provoke comparison with Claude; and in force and solemnity they can in no wise stand with the landscape of the Venetians.

§ 44. Changes introduced by him in the received system of art.

The painter evidently felt that he had farther powers, and pressed forward into the field where alone they could be brought into play. It was impossible for him, with all his keen and long-disciplined perceptions, not to feel that the real color of nature had never been attempted by any school; and that though conventional representations had been given by the Venetians of sunlight and twilight, by invariably rendering the whites golden and the blues green, yet of the actual, joyous, pure, roseate hues of the external world no record had ever been given. He saw also that the finish and specific grandeur of nature had been given, but her fulness, space, and mystery never; and he saw that the great landscape painters had always sunk the lower middle tints of nature in extreme shade, bringing the entire melody of color as many degrees down as their possible light was inferior to nature's; and that in so doing a gloomy principle had influenced them even in their choice of subject.

For the conventional color he substituted a pure straightforward rendering of fact, as far as was in his power; and that not of such fact as had been before even suggested, but of all that is *most* brilliant, beautiful, and inimitable; he went to the cataract for its iris, to the conflagration for its flames, asked of the sea its intensest azure, of the sky its clearest gold. For the limited space and defined forms of elder landscape, he substituted the quantity and the mystery of the vastest scenes of earth; and for the subdued chiaroscuro he substituted first a balanced diminution of oppositions throughout the scale, and afterwards, in one or two instances, attempted the reverse of the old principle, taking the lowest portion of the scale truly, and merging the upper part in high light.

§ 45. Difficulties of his later manner. Resultant deficiencies.

Innovations so daring and so various could not be introduced without corresponding peril: the difficulties that lay in his way were more than any human intellect could altogether surmount. In his time there has been no one system of color generally approved; every artist has his own method and his own vehicle; how to do what Gainsborough did, we know not; much less what Titian; to invent a new system of color can hardly be expected of those who cannot recover the old. To obtain perfectly satisfactory results in color under the new conditions introduced by Turner, would at least have required the exertion of all his energies in that sole direction. But color has always been only his second object The effects of space and form, in which he delights, often require the employment of means and method totally at variance with those necessary for the obtaining of pure color. It is physically impossible, for instance, rightly to draw certain forms of the upper clouds with the brush ; nothing will do it but the pallet knife with loaded white after the blue ground is prepared. Now it is impossible that a cloud so drawn, however glazed afterwards, should have the virtue of a thin warm tint of Titian's, showing the canvas throughout. So it happens continually. Add to these difficulties, those of the peculiar subjects attempted, and to these again, all that belong to the altered system of chiaroscuro, and it is evident that we must not be surprised at finding many deficiencies or faults in such works, especially in the earlier of them, nor even suffer ourselves to be withdrawn by the pursuit of what seems censurable from our devotion to what is mighty.

Notwithstanding, in some chosen examples of pictures of this kind, I will name three : Juliet and her Nurse ; the Old Temeraire, and the Slave Ship : I do not admit that there are at the time of their first appearing on the walls of the Royal Academy, any demonstrably avoidable faults. I do not deny that there may be, nay, that it is likely there are ; but there is no living artist in Europe whose judgment might safely be taken on the subject, or who could without arrogance affirm of any part of such a picture, that it was *wrong ;* I am perfectly willing to allow, that the lemon yellow is not properly representative of the yellow of the sky, that the loading of the color is in many places disagreeable, that many of the details are drawn with a kind of imperfection different from what they would have in nature, and that many of the parts fail of imitation, especially to an uneducated eye. But no living authority is of weight enough to prove that the virtues of the picture could have been obtained at a less sacrifice, or that they are not worth the sacrifice; and though it is perfectly possible that such may be the case, and that what Turner has done may hereafter in some respects be done better, I believe myself that these works are at the time of their first appearing as perfect as those of Phidias or Leonardo; that is to say, incapable in their way, of any improvement conceivable by human mind.

Also, it is only by comparison with such that we are authorized to affirm definite faults in any of his others, for we should have been bound to speak, at least for the present, with the same modesty respecting even his worst pictures of this class, had not his more noble efforts given us canons of criticism.

But, as was beforehand to be expected from the difficulties he grappled with, Turner is exceedingly unequal; he appears always as a champion in the thick of fight, sometimes with his foot on his enemies' necks, sometimes staggered or struck to his knee; once or twice altogether down. He has failed most frequently, as before noticed, in elaborate compositions, from redundant quantity; sometimes, like most other men, from overcare, as very signally in a large and most labored drawing of Bamborough; sometimes, unaccountably, his eye for color seeming to fail him for a time, as in a large painting of Rome from the Forum, and in the Cicero's Villa, Building of Carthage, and the picture of this year in the British Institution; and sometimes I am sorry to say, criminally, from taking licenses which he must know to be illegitimate, or indulging in conventionalities which he does not require.

On such instances I shall not insist, for the finding fault with Turner is not, I think, either decorous in myself or like to be beneficial to the reader.* The greater number of fail-

---

*One point, however, it is incumbent upon me to notice, being no question of art but of material. The reader will have observed that I strictly limited the perfection of Turner's works to the time of their first appearing on the walls of the Royal Academy. It bitterly grieves me to have to do this, but the fact is indeed so. No *picture* of Turner's is seen in perfection a month after it is painted. The Walhalla cracked before it had been eight days in the Academy rooms; the vermilions frequently lose lustre long before the exhibition is over; and when all ures took place in the transition period, when the artist was feeling for the new qualities, and endeavoring to reconcile them with more careful elaboration of form than was properly consistent with them. Gradually his hand became more free, his perception and grasp of the new truths more certain, and his choice of subject more adapted to the exhibition of them. But his powers did

§ 46. Reflection of his very recent works.

---

the colors begin to get hard a year or two after the picture is painted, a painful deadness and opacity comes over them, the whites especially becoming lifeless, and many of the warmer passages settling into a hard valueless brown, even if the paint remains perfectly firm, which is far from being always the case. I believe that in some measure these results are unavoidable, the colors being so peculiarly blended and mingled in Turner's present manner as almost to necessitate their irregular drying; but that they are not necessary to the extent in which they sometimes take place, is proved by the comparative safety of some even of the more brilliant works. Thus the Old Temeraire is nearly safe in color, and quite firm; while the Juliet and her Nurse is now the ghost of what it was; the Slaver shows no cracks, though it is chilled in some of the darker passages, while the Walhalla and several of the recent Venices cracked in the Royal Academy. It is true that the damage makes no further progress after the first year or two, and that even in its altered state the picture is always valuable and records its intention; but it is bitterly to be regretted that so great a painter should not leave a single work by which in succeeding ages he might be estimated. The fact of his using means so imperfect, together with that of his utter neglect of the pictures in his own gallery, are a phenomenon in human mind which appears to me utterly inexplicable; and both are without excuse. If the effects he desires cannot be to their full extent produced except by these treacherous means, one picture only should be painted each year as an exhibition of immediate power, and the rest should be carried out, whatever the expense of labor and time, in safe materials, even at the risk of some deterioration of immediate effect. That which is greatest in him is entirely independent of means; much of what he now accomplishes illegitimately might without doubt be attained in securer modes—what cannot should without hesitation be abandoned. Fortunately the drawings appear subject to no such deterioration. Many of them are now almost destroyed, but this has been I think always through ill treatment, or has been the case only with very early works. I have myself known no instance of a drawing properly protected, and not rashly exposed to light suffering the slightest change. The great foes of Turner, as of all other great colorists especially, are the picture cleaner and the mounter.

not attain their highest results till towards the year 1840, about which period they did so suddenly, and with a vigor and concentration which rendered his pictures at that time almost incomparable with those which had preceded them. The drawings of Nemi, and Oberwesel, in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., were among the first evidences of this sudden advance; only the foliage in both of these is inferior; and it is remarkable that in this phase of his art, Turner has drawn little foliage, and that little badly—the great characteristic of it being its power, beauty, and majesty of color, and its abandonment of all littleness and division of thought to a single impression. In the year 1842, he made some drawings from recent sketches in Switzerland; these, with some produced in the following years, all of Swiss subject, I consider to be, on the whole, the most characteristic and perfect works he has ever produced. The Academy pictures were far inferior to them; but among these examples of the same power were not wanting, more especially in the smaller pictures of Venice. The Sun of Venice, going to sea; the San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina; and a view of Murano, with the Cemetery, were all faultless; another of Venice, seen from near Fusina, with sunlight and moonlight mixed (1844) was, I think, when I first saw it, (and it still remains little injured,) the most perfectly *beautiful* piece of color of all that I have seen produced by human hands, by any means, or at any period. Of the exhibition of 1845, I have only seen a small Venice, (still I believe in the artist's possession,) and the two whaling subjects. The Venice is a second-rate work, and the two others altogether unworthy of him.

In conclusion of our present sketch of the course of landscape art, it may be generally stated that Turner is the only painter, so far as I know, who has ever drawn the sky, (not the clear sky, which we before saw belonged exclusively to the religious schools, but the various forms and phenomena of the cloudy heavens,) all previous artists having only represented it typically or partially; but he absolutely and universally: he is the only painter who has ever drawn a mountain, or a stone; no other man ever having learned their organization, or possessed himself of their spirit, except in part and obscurely, (the one or two stones noted of Tintoret's, (Vol. II., Part III. Ch. 3,) are perhaps hardly enough on which to found an exception in his favor.) He is the only painter who ever drew the stem of a tree, Titian having come the nearest before him, and excelling him in the muscular development of the larger trunks, (though sometimes losing the woody strength in a serpent-like flaccidity,) but missing the grace and character of the ramifications. He is the only painter who has ever represented the surface of calm, or the force of agitated water; who has represented the effects of space on distant objects, or who has rendered the abstract beauty of natural color. These assertions I make deliberately, after careful weighing and consideration, in no spirit of dispute, or momentary zeal; but from strong and convinced feeling, and with the consciousness of being able to prove them.

§ 47. Difficulty of demonstration in such subjects.

This proof is only partially and incidentally attempted in the present portion of this work, which was originally written, as before explained, for a temporary purpose, and which, therefore, I should have gladly cancelled, but that, relating as it does only to simple matters of fact and not to those of feeling, it may still, perhaps, be of service to some readers who would be unwilling to enter into the more speculative fields with which the succeeding sections are concerned. I leave, therefore, nearly as it was originally written, the following examination of the relative truthfulness of elder and of recent art; always requesting the reader to remember, as some excuse for the inadequate execution, even of what I have here attempted, how difficult it is to express or explain, by language only, those delicate qualities of the object of sense, on the seizing of which all refined truth of representation depends. Try, for instance, to explain in language the exact qualities of the lines on which depend the whole truth and beauty of expression about the half-opened lips of Raffaelle's St. Catherine. There is, indeed, nothing in landscape so ineffable as this; but there is no part nor portion of God's works in which the delicacy appreciable by a cultivated eye, and necessary to be rendered in art, is not beyond all expression and explanation ; I cannot tell it you, if you do not see it. And thus I have been entirely unable, in the following pages, to demonstrate clearly anything of really deep and perfect truth ; nothing but what is coarse and commonplace, in matters to be judged of by the senses, is within the reach of argument. How much or how little I have done must be judged of by the reader : how much it is impossible to do I have more fully shown in the concluding section.

I shall first take into consideration those general truths, common to all the objects of nature, which are productive of what is usually called "effect," that is to say, truths of tone, general color, space, and light. I shall then investigate the truths of specific form and color, in the four great component parts of landscape—sky, earth, water, and vegetation.

SECTION II.

OF GENERAL TRUTHS.

CHAPTER I.

OF TRUTH OF TONE.

As I have already allowed, that in effects of tone, the old masters have never yet been equalled; and as this is the first, and nearly the last, concession I shall have to make to them, I wish it at once to be thoroughly understood how far it extends.

§ 1. Meaning of the word "tone:" First, the right relation of objects in shadow to the principal light.

I understand two things by the word "tone:"—first, the exact relief and relation of objects against and to each other in substance and darkness, as they are nearer or more distant, and the perfect relation of the shades of all of them to the chief light of the picture, whether that be sky, water, or anything else. Secondly, the exact relation of the colors of the shadows to the colors of the lights, so that they may be at once felt to be merely different degrees of the same light; and the accurate relation among the illuminated parts themselves, with respect to the degree in which they are influenced by the color of the light itself, whether warm or cold; so that the whole of the picture (or, where several tones are united, those parts of it which are under each), may be felt to be in one climate, under one kind of light, and in one kind of atmosphere; this being chiefly dependent on that peculiar and inexplicable quality of each color laid on, which makes the eye feel both what is the actual color of the object represen-

§ 2. Secondly, the quality of color by which it is felt to owe part of its brightness to the hue of light upon it.

ted, and that it is raised to its apparent pitch by illumination. A very bright brown, for instance, out of sunshine, may be precisely of the same shade of color as a very dead or cold brown in sunshine, but it will be totally different in *quality;* and that quality by which the illuminated dead color would be felt in nature different from the unilluminated bright one, is what artists are perpetually aiming at, and connoisseurs talking nonsense about, under the name of "tone." The want of tone in pictures is caused by objects looking bright in their own positive hue, and not by illumination, and by the consequent want of sensation of the raising of their hues by light.

§ 3. Difference between tone in its first sense and aerial perspective.

The first of these meanings of the word "tone" is liable to be confounded with what is commonly called "aerial perspective." But aerial perspective is the expression of space, by any means whatsoever, sharpness of edge, vividness of color, etc., assisted by greater pitch of shadow, and requires only that objects should be detached from each other, by degrees of intensity in *proportion* to their distance, without requiring that the difference between the farthest and nearest should be in positive quantity the same that nature has put. But what I have called "tone" requires that there should be the same sum of difference, as well as the same division of differences.

§ 4. The pictures of the old masters perfect in relation of middle tints to light.

Now the finely toned pictures of the old masters are, in this respect, some of the notes of nature played two or three octaves below her key; the dark objects in the middle distance having precisely the same relation to the light of the sky which they have in nature, but the light being necessarily infinitely lowered, and the mass of the shadow deepened in the same degree. I have often been struck, when looking at a camera-obscuro on a dark day, with the exact resemblance the image bore to one of the finest pictures of the old masters; all the foliage coming dark against the sky, and nothing being seen in its mass but here and there the isolated light of a silvery stem or an unusually illumined cluster of leafage.

Now if this could be done consistently, and all the notes of nature given in this way an octave or two down, it would be right and necessary so to do: but be it observed, not only does nature surpass us in power of obtaining light as much as the sun surpasses white paper, but she also infinitely surpasses us in her power of shade. Her deepest shades are void spaces from which no light whatever is reflected to the eye; ours are black surfaces from which, paint as black as we may, a great deal of light is still reflected, and which, placed against one of nature's deep bits of gloom, would tell as distinct light. Here we are then, with white paper for our highest light, and visible illumined surface for our deepest shadow, set to run the gauntlet against nature, with the sun for her light, and vacuity for her gloom. It is evident that *she* can well afford to throw her material objects dark against the brilliant aerial tone of her sky, and yet give in those objects themselves a thousand intermediate distances and tones before she comes to black, or to anything like it—all the illumined surfaces of her objects being as distinctly and vividly brighter than her nearest and darkest shadows, as the sky is brighter than those illumined surfaces. But if we, against our poor, dull obscurity of yellow paint, instead of sky, insist on having the same relation of shade in material objects, we go down to the bottom of our scale at once; and what in the world are we to do then? Where are all our intermediate distances to come from?—how are we to express the aerial relations among the parts themselves, for instance, of foliage, whose most distant boughs are already almost black?—how are we to come up from this to the foreground, and when we have done so, how are we to express the distinction between its solid parts, already as dark as we can make them, and its vacant hollows, which nature has marked sharp and clear and black, among its lighted surfaces? It cannot but be evident at a glance, that if to any one of the steps from one distance to another, we give the same quantity of difference in pitch of shade which nature does, we must pay for this expenditure of our means by totally missing half a

§ 5. And consequently totally false in relation of middle tints to darkness.

dozen distances, not a whit less important or marked, and so sacrifice a multitude or truths, to obtain one. And this, accordingly was the means by which the old masters obtained their (truth ?) of tone. They chose those steps of distance which are the most conspicuous and noticeable—that for instance from sky to foliage, or from clouds to hills—and they gave these their precise pitch of difference in shade with exquisite accuracy of imitation. Their means were then exhausted, and they were obliged to leave their trees flat masses of mere filled-up outline, and to omit the truths of space in every individual part of their picture by the thousand. But this they did not care for ; it saved them trouble; they reached their grand end, imitative effect ; they thrust home just at the places where the common and careless eye looks for imitation, and they attained the broadest and most faithful appearance of truth of tone which art can exhibit.

But they are prodigals, and foolish prodigals, in art ; they lavish their whole means to get one truth, and leave themselves powerless when they should seize a thousand. And is it indeed worthy of being called a truth, when we have a vast history given us to relate, to the fulness of which neither our limits nor our language are adequate, instead of giving all its parts abridged in the order of their importance, to omit or deny the greater part of them, that we may dwell with verbal fidelity on two or three? Nay, the very truth to which the rest are sacrificed is rendered falsehood by their absence, the relation of the tree to the sky is marked as an impossibility by the want of relation of its parts to each other.

§ 6. General falsehood of such a system.

Turner starts from the beginning with a totally different principle. He boldly takes pure white (and justly, for it is the sign of the most intense sunbeams) for his highest light, and lamp-black for his deepest shade ; and between these he makes every degree of shade indicative of a separate degree of distance,*

§ 7. The principle of Turner in this respect.

---

* Of course I am not speaking here of treatment of chiaroscuro, but of that quantity of depth of shade by which, *cæteris paribus*, a near object will exceed a distant one. For the truth of the systems

giving each step of approach, not the exact difference in pitch which it would have in nature, but a difference bearing the same proportion to that which his sum of possible shade bears to the sum of nature's shade ; so that an object half way between his horizon and his foreground will be exactly in half tint of force, and every minute division of intermediate space will have just its proportionate share of the lesser sum, and no more. Hence where the old masters expressed one distance, he expresses a hundred ; and where they said furlongs, he says leagues. Which of these modes of procedure be most agreeable with truth, I think I may safely leave the reader to decide for himself. He will see in this very first instance, one proof of what we above asserted, that the deceptive imitation of nature is inconsistent with real truth ; for the very means by which the old masters attained the apparent accuracy of tone which is so satisfying to the eye, compelled them to give up all idea of real relations of retirement, and to represent a few successive and marked stages of distance, like the scenes of a theatre, instead of the imperceptible, multitudinous, symmetrical retirement of nature, who is not more careful to separate her nearest bush from her farthest one, than to separate the nearest bough of that bush from the one next to it.

§ 8. Comparison of N. Poussin's "Phocion,"

Take for instance, one of the finest landscapes that ancient art has produced—the work of a really great and intellectual mind, the quiet Nicholas Poussin, in our own National Gallery, with the traveller washing his feet. The first idea we receive from this picture is, that it is evening, and all the light coming from the horizon. Not so. It is full moon, the light coming steep from the left, as is shown by the shadow of the stick on the right-hand pedestal—(for if the sun were not very high, that shadow could not lose itself half way down, and if it were not lateral, the shadow would slope, instead of being vertical). Now, ask yourself, and answer candidly, if those black masses of foliage, in which

of Turner and the old masters, as regards chiaroscuro. vide Chapter III. of this Section, § 8.

scarcely any form is seen but the outline, be a true representation of trees under noon-day sunlight, sloping from the left, bringing out, as it necessarily would do, their masses into golden green, and marking every leaf and bough with sharp shadow and sparkling light. The only truth in the picture is the exact pitch of relief against the sky of both trees and hills, and to this the organization of the hills, the intricacy of the foliage, and everything indicative either of the nature of the light, or the character of the objects, are unhesitatingly sacrificed. So much falsehood does it cost to obtain two apparent truths of tone. Or take, as a still more glaring instance, No. 260 in the Dulwich Gallery, where the trunks of the trees, even of those farthest off, on the left, are as black as paint can make them, and there is not, and cannot be, the slightest increase of force, or any marking whatsoever of distance by color, or any other means, between them and the foreground.

§ 9. With Turner's "Mercury and Argus,"

Compare with these Turner's treatment of his materials in the Mercury and Argus. He has here his light actually coming from the distance, the sun being nearly in the centre of the picture, and a violent relief of objects against it would be far more justifiable than in Poussin's case. But this dark relief is used in its full force only with the nearest *leaves* of the nearest group of foliage overhanging the foreground from the left; and between these and the more distant members of the same group, though only three or four yards separate, distinct aerial perspective and intervening mist and light are shown; while the large tree in the centre, though very dark, as being very near, compared with all the distance, is much diminished in intensity of shade from this nearest group of leaves, and is faint compared with all the foreground. It is true that this tree has not, in consequence, the actual pitch of shade against the sky which it would have in nature; but it has precisely as much as it possibly can have, to leave it the same proportionate relation to the objects near at hand. And it cannot but be evident to the thoughtful reader, that whatever trickery or deception may be the result of a contrary mode of treatment, this is the only scientific or essentially truthful system, and that what it loses in tone it gains in aerial perspective.

§ 10. And with the "Datur Hora Quieti."

Compare again the last vignette in Rogers's Poems, the "Datur Hora Quieti," where everything, even the darkest parts of the trees, is kept pale and full of graduation; even the bridge where it crosses the descending stream of sunshine, rather lost in the light than relieved against it, until we come up to the foreground, and then the vigorous local black of the plough throws the whole picture into distance and sunshine. I do not know anything in art which can for a moment be set beside this drawing for united intensity of light and repose.

Observe, I am not at present speaking of the beauty or desirableness of the system of the old masters; it may be sublime, and affecting, and ideal, and intellectual, and a great deal more; but all I am concerned with at present is, that it is not *true;* while Turner's is the closest and most studied approach to truth of which the materials of art admit.

§ 11. The second sense of the word "tone."

It was not, therefore, with reference to this division of the subject that I admitted inferiority in our great modern master to Claude or Poussin, but with reference to the second and more usual meaning of the word "tone"—the exact relation and fitness of shadow and light, and of the hues of all objects under them; and more especially that precious quality of each color laid on, which makes it appear a quiet color illuminated, not a bright color in shade. But I allow this inferiority only with respect to the paintings, of Turner, not to his drawings. I could se-

§ 12. Remarkable difference in this respect between the paintings and drawings of Turner.

lect from among the works named in Chap. VI. of this section, pieces of tone absolutely faultless and perfect, from the coolest grays of wintry dawn to the intense fire of summer noon. And the difference between the prevailing character of these and that of nearly all the paintings, (for the early oil pictures of Turner are far less perfect in tone than the most recent,) it is difficult to account for, but on the supposition that there is something in the material which modern artists in general are incapable of mastering, and which compels Turner himself to think less of tone in oil color, than of other and more important qualities. The total failures of Callcott, whose struggles after tone ended so invariably in shivering winter or brown paint, the misfortune of Landseer with his evening sky in 1842, the frigidity of Stanfield, and the earthiness and opacity which all the magnificent power and admirable science of Etty are unable entirely to conquer, are too fatal and convincing proofs of the want of knowledge of means, rather than of the absence of aim, in modern artists as a body. Yet, with respect to Turner, however much the want of tone in his early paintings (the Fall of Carthage, for instance, and others painted at a time when he was producing the most exquisite hues of light in water-color) might seem to favor such a supposition, there are passages in his recent works (such, for instance, as the sunlight along the sea, in the Slaver) which directly contradict it, and which prove to us that where he now errs in tone, (as in the Cicero's Villa,) it is less owing to want of power to reach it, than to the pursuit of some different and nobler end. I shall therefore glance at the particular modes in which Turner manages his tone in his present Academy pictures; the early ones must be given up at once. Place a genuine untouched Claude beside the Crossing the Brook, and the difference in value and tenderness of tone will be felt in an instant, and felt the more painfully because all the cool and transparent qualities of Claude would have been here desirable, and in their place, and appear to have been aimed at. The foreground of the Building of Carthage, and the greater part of the architecture of the Fall, are equally heavy and evidently paint, if we compare them with genuine passages of Claude's sunshine. There is a very grand and simple piece of tone in the possession of J. Allnutt, Esq., a sunset behind willows, but even this is wanting in refinement of shadow, and is crude in its extreme distance. Not so with the recent Academy pictures; many of their passages are absolutely faultless; all are refined and marvellous, and with the exception of the Cicero's Villa, we shall find few pictures painted within the last ten years which do not either present

§ 13. Not owing to want of power over the material.

us with perfect tone, or with some higher beauty, to which it is necessarily sacrificed. If we glance at the requirements of nature, and her superiority of means to ours, we shall see why and how it is sacrificed.

§ 14. The two distinct qualities of light to be considered.

Light, with reference to the tone it induces on objects, is either to be considered as neutral and white, bringing out local colors with fidelity; or colored, and consequently modifying these local tints, with its own. But the power of pure white light to exhibit local color is strangely variable. The morning light of about nine or ten is usually very pure; but the difference of its effect on different days, independently of mere brilliancy, is as inconceivable as inexplicable. Every one knows how capriciously the colors of a fine opal vary from day to day, and how rare the lights are which bring them fully out. Now the expression of the strange, penetrating, deep, neutral light, which, while it *alters* no color, brings every color up to the highest possible pitch and key of pure, harmonious intensity, is the chief attribute of finely-toned pictures by the great *colorists* as opposed to pictures of equally high tone, by masters who, careless of color, are content, like Cuyp, to lose local tints in the golden blaze of absorbing light.

§ 15. Falsehoods by which Titian attains the appearance of quality in light.

Falsehood, in this neutral tone, if it may be so called, is a matter far more of feeling than of proof, for any color is *possible* under such lights; it is meagreness and feebleness only which are to be avoided; and these are rather matters of sensation than of reasoning. But it is yet easy enough to prove by what exaggerated and false means the pictures most celebrated for this quality are endowed with their richness and solemnity of color. In the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian, it is difficult to imagine anything more magnificently impossible than the blue of the distant landscape;—impossible, not from its vividness, but because it is not faint and aerial enough to account for its purity of color; it is too dark and blue at the same time; and there is indeed so total a want of atmosphere in it, that, but for the difference of form, it would be impossible to tell the mountains (intended to be ten miles off) from the robe of Ariadne close to the spectator. Yet make this blue faint, aerial, and distant—make it in the slightest degree to resemble the truth of nature's color—and all the tone of the picture, all its intensity and splendor, will vanish on the instant. So again, in the exquisite and inimitable little bit of color, the Europa in the Dulwich Gallery; the blue of the dark promontory on the left is thoroughly absurd and impossible, and the warm tones of the clouds equally so, unless it were sunset ; but the blue especially, because it is nearer than several points of land which are equally in shadow, and yet are rendered in warm gray. But the whole value and tone of the picture would be destroyed if this blue were altered.

§ 16. Turner will not use such means.

Now, as much of this kind of richness of tone is always given by Turner as is compatible with truth of aerial effect ; but he will not sacrifice the higher truths of his landscape to mere pitch of color as Titian does. He infinitely prefers having the power of giving extension of space, and fulness of form, to that of giving deep melodies of tone ; he feels too much the incapacity of art, with its feeble means of light, to give the abundance of nature's gradations ; and therefore it is, that taking pure white for his highest expression of light, that even pure yellow may give him one more step in the scale of shade, he becomes necessarily inferior in richness of effect to the old masters of tone, (who always used a golden highest light,) but gains by the sacrifice a thousand more essential truths. For,

§ 17. But gains in essential truth by the sacrifice.

though we all know how much more like light, in the abstract, a finely-toned warm hue will be to the feelings than white, yet it is utterly impossible to mark the same number of gradations between such a sobered high light and the deepest shadow, which we can between this and white ; and as these gradations are absolutely necessary to give the facts of form and distance, which, as we have above shown, are more important than any truths of tone,* Turner sacrifices the richness of his picture to its completeness—the manner of the statement to its matter. And not only is he right in doing this for the sake of space, but he is right also in the abstract question of color; for as we observed above (Sect. 14,) it is only the white light—the perfect unmodified group of rays—which will bring out local color perfectly; and if the picture, therefore, is to be complete in its system of color, that is, if it is to have each of the three primitives in their purity, it *must* have white for its highest light, otherwise the purity of one of them at least will be impossible. And this leads us to notice the second and more frequent quality of light, (which is assumed if we make our highest representation of it yellow,) the positive hue, namely, which it may itself possess, of course modifying whatever local tints it exhibits, and thereby rendering certain colors necessary, and certain colors impossible. Under the direct yellow light of a descending sun, for instance, pure white and pure blue are both impossible; because the purest whites and blues that nature could produce would be turned in some degree into gold or green by it; and when the sun is within half a degree of the horizon, if the sky be clear, a rose light supersedes the golden one, still more overwhelming in its effect on local color. I have seen the pale fresh green of spring vegetation in the gardens of Venice, on the Lido side, turned pure russet, or between that and crimson, by a vivid sunset of this kind, every particle of green color being absolutely annihilated. And so under all colored lights, (and there are few, from dawn to twilight, which are not slightly tinted by some accident of atmosphere,) there is a change of local color, which, when in a picture it is so exactly proportioned that we feel at once both what the local colors are in themselves, and what is the color and strength of the light upon them, gives us truth of tone.

---

* More important, observe, *as matters of truth or fact.* It may often chance that, as a matter of feeling, the tone is the more important of the two ; but with this we have here no concern.

§ 18. The second quality of light.

For expression of effects of yellow sunlight, parts might be chosen out of the good pictures of Cuyp, which have never been equalled in art. But I much doubt if there be a single *bright* Cuyp in the world, which, taken as a whole, does not present many glaring solecisms in tone. I have not seen many fine pictures of his, which were not utterly spoiled by the vermilion dress of some principal figure, a vermilion totally unaffected and unwarmed by the golden hue of the rest of the picture; and, what is worse, with little distinction, between its own illumined and shaded parts, so that it appears altogether out of sunshine, the color of a bright vermilion in dead, cold daylight. It is possible that the original color may have gone down in all cases, or that these parts may have been villanously repainted: but I am the rather disposed to believe them genuine, because even throughout the best of his pictures there are evident recurrences of the same kind of solecism in other colors—greens for instance—as in the steep bank on the right of the largest picture in the Dulwich Gallery; and browns, as in the lying cow in the same picture, which is in most visible and painful contrast with the one standing beside it, the flank of the standing one being bathed in breathing sunshine, and the reposing one laid in with as dead, opaque, and lifeless brown as ever came raw from a novice's pallet. And again, in that marked 83, while the figures on the right are walking in the most precious light, and those just beyond them in the distance leave a furlong or two of pure visible sunbeams between us and them, the cows in the centre are entirely deprived, poor things, of both light and air. And these failing parts, though they often escape the eye when we are near the picture and able to dwell upon what is beautiful in it, yet so injure its whole effect that I question if there be many Cuyps in which vivid colors occur, which will not lose their effect, and become cold and flat at a distance of ten or twelve paces, retaining their influence only when the eye is close enough to rest on the right parts without including the whole. Take, for instance, the large one in our National Gallery, seen from the opposite door, where the black cow appears a great deal nearer than the dogs, and the golden tones of the distance look like a sepia drawing rather than like sunshine, owing chiefly to the utter want of aerial grays indicated through them.

§ 19. The perfection of Cuyp in this respect interfered with by numerous solecisms.

Now, there is no instance in the works of Turner of anything so faithful and imitative of sunshine as the best parts of Cuyp ; but at the same time, there is not a single vestige of the same kind of solecism. It is true, that in his fondness for color, Turner is in the habit of allowing excessively cold fragments in his warmest pictures ; but these are never, observe, warm colors with no light upon them, useless as contrasts while they are discords in the tone ; but they are bits of the very coolest tints, partially removed from the general influence, and exquisitely valuable as color, though, with all deference be it spoken, I think them sometimes slightly destructive of what would otherwise be perfect tone. For instance, the two blue and white stripes on the drifting flag of the Slave Ship, are, I think, the least degree too purely cool. I think both the blue and white would be impossible under such a light ; and in the same way the white parts of the dress of the Napoleon interfered by their coolness with the perfectly managed warmth of all the rest of the picture. But both these lights are reflexes, and it is nearly impossible to say what tones may be assumed even by the warmest light reflected from a cool surface ; so that we cannot actually convict these parts of falsehood, and though we should have liked the *tone* of the picture better had they been slightly warmer we cannot but like the *color* of the picture better with them as they are ; while Cuyp's failing portions are not only evidently and demonstrably false, being in direct light, but are as disagreeable in color as false in tone, and injurious to everything near them. And the best proof of the grammatical accuracy of the tones of Turner is in the perfect and unchanging influence of all his pictures at any distance. We approach only to follow the sunshine into every cranny of the leafage, and retire only to feel it diffused over the scene, the whole picture glowing like a sun or star at whatever distance we stand, and lighting the air between us and it ; while many even of the best pictures of Claude must be looked close into to be felt, and lose light every foot that we retire. The smallest of the three seaports in the National Gallery is valu-

§ 20. Turner is not so perfect in parts—far more so in the whole.

able and right in tone when we are close to it ; but ten yards off, it is all brick-dust, offensively and evidently false in its whole hue.

§ 21. The power in Turner of uniting a number of tones.

The comparison of Turner with Cuyp and Claude may sound strange in most ears ; but this is chiefly because we are not in the habit of analyzing and dwelling upon those difficult and daring passages of the modern master which do not at first appeal to our ordinary notions of truth, owing to his habit of uniting two, three, or even more separate tones in the same composition. In this also he strictly follows nature, for wherever climate changes, tone changes, and the climate changes with every 200 feet of elevation, so that the upper clouds are always different in tone from the lower ones, these from the rest of the landscape, and in all probability, some part of the horizon from the rest. And when nature allows this in a high degree, as in her most gorgeous effects she always will, she does not herself impress at once with intensity of tone, as in the deep and quiet yellows of a July evening, but rather with the magnificence and variety of associated color, in which, if we give time and attention to it, we shall gradually find the solemnity and the depth of twenty tones instead of one. Now in Turner's power of associating cold with warm light, no one has ever approached, or even ventured into the same field with him. The old masters, content with one simple tone, sacrificed to its unity all the exquisite gradations and varied touches of relief and change by which nature unites her hours with each other. They gave the warmth of the sinking sun, overwhelming all things in its gold ; but they did not give those gray passages about the horizon where, seen through its dying light, the cool and the gloom of night gather themselves for their victory. Whether it was in them impotence or judgment, it is not for me to decide. I have only to point to the daring of Turner in this respect, as something to which art affords no matter of comparison, as that in which the mere attempt is, in itself, superiority. Take the evening effect with the Temeraire. That picture will not, at the first glance, deceive as a piece of actual sunlight ; but this is because there is in it more than sunlight, because under the blazing veil of vaulted fire which lights the vessel on her last path, there is a blue, deep, desolate hollow of darkness, out of which you can hear the voice of the night wind, and the dull boom of the disturbed sea ; because the cold, deadly shadows of the twilight are gathering through every sunbeam, and moment by moment as you look, you will fancy some new film and faintness of the night has risen over the vastness of the departing form.

§ 22. Recapitulation.

And if, in effects of this kind, time be taken to dwell upon the individual tones, and to study the laws of their reconcilement, there will be found in the recent Academy pictures of this great artist a mass of various truth to which nothing can be brought for comparison, which stands not only unrivalled, but uncontended with, and which, when in carrying out it may be inferior to some of the picked passages of the old masters, is so through deliberate choice rather to suggest a multitude of truths than to imitate one, and through a strife with difficulties of effect of which art can afford no parallel example. Nay, in the next chapter, respecting color, we shall see farther reason for doubting the truth of Claude, Cuyp, and Poussin, in tone,—reason so palpable that if these were all that were to be contended with, I should scarcely have allowed any inferiority in Turner whatsoever ;* but I allow it, not so much with reference to the deceptive imitations of sunlight, wrought out with desperate exaggerations of shade, of the professed landscape painters, as with reference to the glory of Rubens, the glow of Titian, the silver tenderness of Cagliari, and perhaps more than all to the precious and pure passages of intense feeling and heavenly light, holy and undefiled, and glorious with the changeless passion of eternity, which sanctify with their shadeless peace the deep and noble conceptions of the early school of Italy,—of Fra Bartolomeo, Perugino, and the early mind of Raffaelle.

---

* We must not leave the subject of tone without alluding to the works of the late George Barrett, which afford glorious and exalted passages of light ; and John Varley, who, though less truthful in his aim, was frequently deep in his feeling. Some of the sketches of De Wint are also admirable in this respect. As for our oil pictures, the less that is said about them the better. Callcott has the truest aim ; but not having any eye for color, it is impossible for him to succeed in tone.

CHAPTER II.

OF TRUTH OF COLOR.

§ 1. Observations on the color of G. Poussin's La Riccia.

There is, in the first room of the National Gallery, a landscape attributed to Gaspar Poussin, called sometimes Aricia, sometimes Le or La Riccia, according to the fancy of catalogue printers. Whether it can be supposed to resemble the ancient Aricia, now La Riccia, close to Albano, I will not take upon me to determine, seeing that most of the towns of these old masters are quite as like one place as another ; but, at any rate, it is a town on a hill, wooded with two-and-thirty bushes, of very uniform size, and possessing about the same number of leaves each. These bushes are all painted in with one dull opaque brown, becoming very slightly greenish towards the lights, and discover in one place a bit of rock, which of course would in nature have been cool and gray beside the lustrous hues of foliage, and which, therefore, being moreover completely in shade, is consistently and scientifically painted of a very clear, pretty, and positive brick-red, the only thing like color in the picture. The foreground is a piece of road, which in order to make allowance for its greater nearness, for its being completely in light, and, it may be presumed, for the quantity of vegetation usually present on carriage-roads, is given in a very cool green gray, and the truth of the picture is completed by a number of dots in the sky on the right, with a stalk to them, of a sober and similar brown.

§ 2. As compared with the actual scene.

Not long ago, I was slowly descending this very bit of carriage-road, the first turn after you leave Albano, not a little impeded by the worthy successors of the ancient prototypes of Veiento.* It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano and graceful darkness of its ilex grove rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber, the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep, palpitating azure, half ether and half dew. The noon-day sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and its masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it color, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the gray walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every glade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lighting opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen,—casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound, and over all—the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbed repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

---

* "Cæcus adulator—
Dignus Aricinos qui mendicaret ad axes,
Blandaque devexæ jactaret basia rhedæ."

§ 3. Turner himself is inferior in brilliancy to nature.

Tell me who is likest this, Poussin or Turner? Not in his most daring and dazzling efforts could Turner himself come near it; but you could not at the time have thought or remembered the work of any other man as having the remotest hue or resemblance of what you saw. Nor am I speaking of what is uncommon or unnatural; there is no climate, no place, and scarcely an hour, in which nature does not exhibit color which no mortal effort can imitate or approach. For all our artificial pigments are, even when seen under the same circumstances, dead and lightless beside her living color; the green of a growing leaf, the scarlet of a fresh flower, no art nor expedient can reach; but in addition to this, nature exhibits her hues under an intensity of sunlight which trebles their brilliancy, while the painter, deprived of this splendid aid, works still with what is actually a gray shadow compared to the force of nature's color. Take a blade of grass and a scarlet flower, and place them so as to receive sunlight beside the brightest canvas that ever left Turner's easel, and the picture will be extinguished. So far from out-facing nature, he does not, as far as mere vividness of color goes, one-half reach her;—but does he use this brilliancy of color on objects to which it does not properly belong? Let us compare his works in this respect with a few instances from the old masters.

§ 4. Impossible colors of Salvator, Titian;

There is, on the left hand side of Salvator's Mercury and the Woodman in our National Gallery, something, without doubt intended for a rocky mountain, in the middle distance, near enough for all its fissures and crags to be distinctly visible, or, rather, for a great many awkward scratches of the brush over it to be visible, which, though not particularly representative either of one thing or another, are without doubt intended to be symbolical of rocks. Now no mountain in full light, and near enough for its details of crag to be seen, is without great variety of delicate color. Salvator has painted it throughout without one instant of variation ; but this, I suppose, is simplicity and generalization ;—let it pass : but what is the color ? *Pure sky blue*, without one grain of gray, or any modifying hue whatsoever ;—the same brush which had just given the bluest parts of the sky, has been more loaded at the same part of the pallet, and the whole mountain thrown in with unmitigated ultramarine. Now mountains only can become pure blue when there is so much air between us and them that they become mere flat, dark shades, every detail being totally lost : they become blue when they become air, and not till then. Consequently this part of Salvator's painting, being of hills perfectly clear and near, with all their details visible, is, as far as color is concerned, broad, bold falsehood—the direct assertion of direct impossibility.

In the whole range of Turner's works, recent or of old date, you will not find an instance of anything near enough to have details visible, painted in sky blue. Wherever Turner gives blue, there he gives atmosphere ; it is air, not object. Blue he gives to his sea ; so does nature ;—blue he gives, sapphire-deep, to his extreme distance ; so does nature ;—blue he gives to the misty shadows and hollows of his hills ; so does nature : but blue he gives *not*, where detailed and illumined surface are visible ; as he comes into light and character, so he breaks into warmth and varied hue ; nor is there in one of his works, and I speak of the Academy pictures especially, one touch of cold color which is not to be accounted for, and proved right and full of meaning.

I do not say that Salvator's distance is not artist-like ; both in that, and in the yet more glaringly false distances of Titian above alluded to, and in hundreds of others of equal boldness of exaggeration, I can take delight, and perhaps should be sorry to see them other than they are ; but it is somewhat singular to hear people talking of Turner's exquisite care and watchfulness in color as false, while they receive such cases of preposterous and audacious fiction with the most generous and simple credulity.

Again, in the upper sky of the picture of Nicolas Poussin, before noticed, the clouds are of a very fine clear olive-green, about the same tint as the brightest parts of the trees beneath them. They cannot have altered, (or else the trees must have been painted in gray), for the hue is harmonious and well united with the rest of the picture, and the blue and white in the centre of the sky are still fresh and pure. Now a green sky in open and illumined distance is very frequent, and very beautiful ; but rich olive-green clouds, as far as I am acquainted with nature, are a piece of color in which she is not apt to indulge. You will be puzzled to show me such a thing in the recent works of Turner.* Again, take any important group of trees, I do not care whose —Claude's, Salvator's, or Poussin's—with lateral light (that in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, or Gaspar's sacrifice of Isaac, for instance :) Can it be seriously supposed that those murky browns and melancholy greens are representative of the tints of leaves under full noonday sun? I know that you cannot help looking upon all these pictures as pieces of dark relief against a light wholly proceeding from the distances ; but they are nothing of the kind—they are noon and morning effects with full lateral light. Be so kind as to match the color of a leaf in the sun (the darkest you like) as nearly as you can, and bring your matched color and set it beside one of these groups of trees, and take a blade of common grass, and set it beside any part of the fullest light of their foregrounds, and then talk about the truth of color of the old masters!

§ 5. Poussin, and Claude.

---

* There is perhaps nothing more characteristic of a great colorist than his power of using greens in strange places without their being felt as such, or at least than a constant preference of green gray to purple gray. And this hue of Poussin's clouds would have been perfectly agreeable and allowable, had there been gold or crimson enough in the rest of the picture to have thrown it into gray. It is only because the lower clouds are pure white and blue, and because the trees are of the same color as the clouds, that the cloud color becomes false. There is a fine instance of a sky, green in itself, but turned gray by the opposition of warm color, in Turner's Devonport with the Dockyards.

And let not arguments respecting the sublimity or fidelity of *impression* be brought forward here. I have nothing whatever to do with this at present. I am not talking about what is sublime, but about what is true. People attack Turner on this ground;—they never speak of beauty or sublimity with respect to him, but of nature and truth, and let them support their own favorite masters on the same grounds. Perhaps I may have the very deepest veneration for the *feeling* of the old masters, but I must not let it influence me now—my business is to match colors, not to talk sentiment. Neither let it be said that I am going too much into details, and that general truths may be obtained by local falsehood. Truth is only to be measured by close comparison of actual facts; we may talk forever about it in generals, and prove nothing. We cannot tell what effect falsehood may produce on this or that person, but we can very well tell what is false and what is not, and if it produce on our senses the effect of truth, that only demonstrates their imperfection and inaccuracy, and need of cultivation. Turner's color is glaring to one person's sensations, and beautiful to another's. This proves nothing. Poussin's color is right to one, soot to another. This proves nothing. There is no means of arriving at any conclusion but close comparison of both with the known and demonstrable hues of nature, and this comparison will invariably turn Claude or Poussin into blackness, and even Turner into gray.

Whatever depth of gloom may seem to invest the objects of a real landscape, yet a window with that landscape seen through it, will invariably appear a broad space of light as compared with the shade of the room walls; and this single circumstance may prove to us both the intensity and the diffusion of daylight in open air, and the necessity, if a picture is to be truthful in effect of color, that it should tell as a broad space of graduated illumination—not, as do those of the old masters, as a patchwork of black shades. Their works are nature in mourning weeds,—*ὀυδ᾽ ἑν ἡλίῳ καθαρῷ τεθραμμένοι, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ συμμιγεῖ σκιᾷ.*

It is true that there are, here and there, in the Academy pictures, passages in which Turner has translated the unattainable intensity of one tone of color, into the attainable pitch of a higher one: the golden green for instance, of intense sunshine on verdure, into pure yellow, because he knows it to be impossible, with any mixture of blue whatsoever, to give faithfully its relative intensity of light, and Turner always will have his light and shade right, whatever it costs him in color. But he does this in rare cases, and even then over very small spaces; and I should be obliged to his critics if they would go out to some warm, mossy green bank in full summer sunshine, and try to reach its tone; and when they find, as find they will, Indian yellow and chrome look dark beside it, let them tell me candidly which is nearest truth, the gold of Turner, or the mourning and murky olive browns and verdigris greens in which Claude, with the industry and intelligence of a Sevres china painter, drags the laborious bramble leaves over his childish foreground.

§ 6. Turner's translation of colors.

But it is singular enough that the chief attacks on Turner for overcharged brilliancy, are made, not when there could by any possibility be any chance of his outstepping nature, but when he has taken subjects which no colors of earth could ever vie with or reach, such, for instance, as his sunsets among the high clouds. When I come to speak of skies, I shall point out what divisions, proportioned to their elevation, exist in the character of clouds. It is the highest region,—that exclusively characterized by white, filmy, multitudinous, and quiet clouds, arranged in bars, or streaks, or flakes, of which I speak at present, a region which no landscape painters have ever made one effort to represent, except Rubens and Turner—the latter taking it for his most favorite and frequent study. Now we have been speaking hitherto of what is constant and necessary in nature, of the ordinary effects of daylight on ordinary colors, and we repeat again, that no gorgeousness of the pallet can reach even these. But it is a widely different thing when nature herself takes a coloring fit, and does something extraordinary, something really to

§ 7. Notice of effects in which no brilliancy of art can even approach that of reality.

exhibit her power. She has a thousand ways and means of rising above herself, but incomparably the noblest manifestations of her capability of color are in these sunsets among the high clouds. I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose-color, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapor, which would in common daylight be pure snow white, and which give therefore fair field to the tone of light. There is then no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity of the hues assumed. The whole sky from the zenith to the horizon becomes one molten, mantling sea of color and fire ; every black bar turns into massy gold, every ripple and wave into unsullied, shadowless, crimson, and purple, and scarlet, and colors for which there are no words in language, and no ideas in the mind,—things which can only be conceived while they are visible,—the intense hollow blue of the upper sky melting through it all,—showing here deep, and pure, and lightless, there, modulated by the filmy, formless body of the transparent vapor, till it is lost imperceptibly in its crimson and gold. Now there is no connection, no one link of association or resemblance, between those skies and the work of any mortal hand but Turner's. He alone has followed nature in these her highest efforts ; he follows her faithfully, but far behind ; follows at such a distance below her intensity that the Napoleon of last year's exhibition, and the Temeraire of the year before, would look colorless and cold if the eye came upon them after one of nature's sunsets among the high clouds. But there are a thousand reasons why this should not be believed. The concurrence of circumstances necessary to produce the sunsets of which I speak does not take place above five or six times in the summer, and then only for a space of from five to ten minutes, just as the sun reaches the horizon. Considering how seldom people think of looking for sunset at all, and how seldom, if they do, they are in a position from which it can be fully seen, the chances that their attention should be

§ 8. Reasons for the usual incredulity of the observer with respect to their representation.

awake, and their position favorable, during these few flying instants of the year, is almost as nothing. What can the citizen, who can see only the red light on the canvas of the wagon at the end of the street, and the crimson color of the bricks of his neighbor's chimney, know of the flood of fire which deluges the sky from the horizon to the zenith? What can even the quiet inhabitant of the English lowlands, whose scene for the manifestation of the fire of heaven is limited to the tops of hayricks, and the rooks' nests in the old elm-trees, know of the mighty passages of splendor which are tossed from Alp to Alp over the azure of a thousand miles of champaign? Even granting the constant vigor of observation, and supposing the possession of such impossible knowledge, it needs but a moment's reflection to prove how incapable the memory is of retaining for any time the distinct image of the sources even of its most vivid impressions. What recollection have we of the sunsets which delighted us last year? We may know that they were magnificent, or glowing, but no distinct image of color or form is retained—nothing of whose *degree* (for the great difficulty with the memory is to retain, not facts, but *degrees* of fact) we could be so certain as to say of anything now presented to us, that it is like it. If we did say so, we should be wrong; for we may be quite certain that the energy of an impression fades from the memory, and becomes more and more indistinct every day; and thus we compare a faded and indistinct image with the decision and certainty of one present to the senses. How constantly do we affirm that the thunder-storm of last week was the most terrible one we ever saw in our lives, because we compare it, not with the thunder-storm of last year, but with the faded and feeble recollection of it. And so, when we enter an exhibition, as we have no definite standard of truth before us, our feelings are toned down and subdued to the quietness of color which is all that human power can ordinarily attain to; and when we turn to a piece of higher and closer truth, approaching the pitch of the color of nature, but to which we are not guided, as we should be in nature, by corresponding gradations of light everywhere around us, but which is isolated and cut off suddenly by a frame and a wall, and surrounded by darkness and coldness, what can we expect but that it should surprise and shock the feelings? Suppose, where the Napoleon hung in the Academy last year, there could have been left, instead, an opening in the wall, and through that opening, in the midst of the obscurity of the dim room and the smoke-laden atmosphere, there could suddenly have been poured the full glory of a tropical sunset, reverberated from the sea: How would you have shrunk, blinded, from its scarlet and intolerable lightnings! What picture in the room would not have been blackness after it? And why then do you blame Turner because he dazzles you? Does not the falsehood rest with those who do *not?* There was not one hue in this whole picture which was not far below what nature would have used in the same circumstances, nor was there one inharmonious or at variance with the rest;—the stormy blood-red of the horizon, the scarlet of the breaking sunlight, the rich crimson browns of the wet and illumined sea-weed; the pure gold and purple of the upper sky, and, shed through it all, the deep passage of solemn blue, where the cold moonlight fell on one pensive spot of the limitless shore—all were given with harmony as perfect as their color was intense; and if, instead of passing, as I doubt not you did, in the hurry of your unreflecting prejudice, you had paused but so much as one quarter of an hour before the picture, you would have found the sense of air and space blended with every line, and breathing in every cloud, and every color instinct and radiant with visible, glowing, absorbing light.

§ 9. Color of the Napoleon.

It is to be observed, however, in general, that wherever in brilliant effects of this kind, we approach to anything like a true statement of nature's color, there must yet be a distinct difference in the impression we convey, because we cannot approach her *light.* All such hues are usually given by her with an accompanying intensity of sunbeams which dazzles and overpowers the eye, so that it cannot rest on the actual colors,

§ 10. Necessary discrepancy between the attainable brilliancy of color and light.

nor understand what they are; and hence in art, in rendering all effects of this kind, there must be a want of the ideas of *imitation*, which are the great source of enjoyment to the ordinary observer; because we can only give one series of truths, those of color, and are unable to give the accompanying truths of light, so that the more true we are in color, the greater, ordinarily, will be the discrepancy felt between the intensity of hue and the feebleness of light. But the painter who really loves nature will not, on this account, give you a faded and feeble image, which indeed may appear to you to be right, because your feelings can detect no discrepancy in its parts, but which he knows to derive its apparent truth from a systematized falsehood. No; he will make you understand and feel that art *cannot* imitate nature—that where it appears to do so, it must malign her, and mock her. He will give you, or state to you, such truths as are in his power, completely and perfectly; and those which he cannot give, he will leave to your imagination. If you are acquainted with nature, you will know all he has given to be true, and you will supply from your memory and from your heart that life which he cannot give. If you are unacquainted with nature, seek elsewhere for whatever may happen to satisfy your feelings; but do not ask for the truth which you would not acknowledge and could not enjoy.

§ 11. This discrepancy less in Turner than in other colorists.

Nevertheless the aim and struggle of the artist must always be to do away with this discrepancy as far as the powers of art admit, not by lowering his color, but by increasing his light. And it is indeed by this that the works of Turner are peculiarly distinguished from those of all other colorists, by the dazzling intensity, namely, of the light which he sheds through every hue, and which, far more than their brilliant color, is the real source of their overpowering effect upon the eye, an effect so *reasonably* made the subject of perpetual animadversion, as if the sun which they represent were quite a quiet, and subdued, and gentle, and manageable luminary, and never dazzled anybody, under any circumstances whatsoever. I am fond of standing by a bright Turner in the Academy, to listen to the unintentional compliments of the crowd—"What a glaring thing!" "I declare I can't look at it!" "Don't it hurt your eyes?"—expressed as if they were in the constant habit of looking the sun full in the face, with the most perfect comfort and entire facility of vision. It is curious after hearing people malign some of Turner's noble passages of light, to pass to some really ungrammatical and false picture of the old masters, in which we have color given *without* light. Take, for instance, the landscape attributed to Rubens, No. 175, in the Dulwich Gallery. I never have spoken, and I never will speak of Rubens but with the most reverential feeling; and whatever imperfections in his art may have resulted from his unfortunate want of seriousness and incapability of true passion, his calibre of mind was originally such that I believe the world may see another Titian and another Raffaelle, before it sees another Rubens. But I have before alluded to the violent license he occasionally assumes; and there is an instance of it in this picture apposite to the immediate question. The sudden streak and circle of yellow and crimson in the middle of the sky of that picture, being the occurrence of a fragment of a sunset color in pure daylight, and in perfect isolation, while at the same time it is rather darker, when translated into light and shade, than brighter than the rest of the sky, is a case of such bold absurdity, come from whose pencil it may, that if every error which Turner has fallen into in the whole course of his life were concentrated into one, that one would not equal it; and as our connoisseurs gaze upon this with never-ending approbation, we must not be surprised that the accurate perceptions which thus take delight in pure fiction, should consistently be disgusted by Turner's fidelity and truth.

§ 12. Its great extent in a landscape attributed to Rubens.

Hitherto, however, we have been speaking of vividness of pure color, and showing that it is used by Turner only where nature uses it, and in no less degree. But we have hitherto, therefore, been speaking of a most limited and uncharacteristic portion of his works;

§ 13. Turner scarcely ever uses pure or vivid color.

for Turner, like all great colorists, is distinguished not more for his power of dazzling and overwhelming the eye with intensity of effect, than for his power of doing so by the use of subdued and gentle means. There is no man living more cautious and sparing in the use of pure color than Turner. To say that he never perpetrates anything like the blue excrescences of foreground, or hills *shot* like a housekeeper's best silk gown, with blue and red, which certain of our celebrated artists consider the essence of the sublime, would be but a poor compliment. I might as well praise the portraits of Titian because they have not the grimace and paint of a clown in a pantomime ; but I do say, and say with confidence, that there is scarcely a landscape artist of the present day, however sober and lightless their effects may look, who does not employ more pure and raw color than Turner ; and that the ordinary tinsel and trash, or rather vicious and perilous stuff, according to the power of the mind producing it, with which the walls of our Academy are half covered, disgracing, in weak hands, or in more powerful, degrading and corrupting our whole school of art, is based on a system of color beside which Turner's is as Vesta to Cotytto—the chastity of fire to the foulness of earth. Every picture of this great colorist has, in one or two parts of it, (key-notes of the whole,) points where the system of each individual color is concentrated by a single stroke, as pure as it can come from the pallet ; but throughout the great space and extent of even the most brilliant of his works, there will not be found a raw color ; that is to say, there is no warmth which has not gray in it, and no blue which has not warmth in it ; and the tints in which he most excels and distances all other men, the most cherished and inimitable portions of his color, are, as with all perfect colorists they must be, his grays.

It is instructive in this respect, to compare the sky of the Mercury and Argus with the various illustrations of the serenity, space, and sublimity naturally inherent in blue and pink, of which every year's exhibition brings forward enough and to spare. In the Mercury and Argus, the pale and vaporous blue of the heated sky is broken with gray and pearly white, the gold color of the light warming it more or less as it approaches or retires from the sun; but throughout, there is not a grain of pure blue; all is subdued and warmed at the same time by the mingling gray and gold, up to the very zenith, where, breaking through the flaky mist, the transparent and deep azure of the sky is expressed with a single crumbling touch; the key-note of the whole is given, and every part of it passes at once far into glowing and aerial space. The reader can scarcely fail to remember at once sundry works in contradistinction to this, with great names attached to them, in which the sky is a sheer piece of plumber's and glazier's work, and should be valued per yard, with heavy extra charge for ultramarine.

§ 14. The basis of gray, under all his vivid hues.

Throughout the works of Turner, the same truthful principle of delicate and subdued color is carried out with a care and labor of which it is difficult to form a conception. He gives a dash of pure white for his highest light; but all the other whites of his picture are pearled down with gray or gold. He gives a fold of pure crimson to the drapery of his nearest figure, but all his other crimsons will be deepened with black, or warmed with yellow. In one deep reflection of his distant sea, we catch a trace of the purest blue; but all the rest is palpitating with a varied and delicate gradation of harmonized tint, which indeed looks vivid blue as a mass, but is only so by opposition. It is the most difficult, the most rare thing, to find in his works a definite space, however small, of unconnected color; that is, either of a blue which has nothing to connect it with the warmth, or of a warm color which has nothing to connect it with the grays of the whole; and the result is, that there is a general system and undercurrent of gray pervading the whole of his color, out of which his highest lights, and those local touches of pure color, which are, as I said before, the key-notes of the picture, flash with the peculiar brilliancy and intensity in which he stands alone.

Intimately associated with this toning down and connection of the colors actually used, is his inimitable power of varying and blending them, so as never to give a quarter of an inch of canvas without a change in it, a melody as well as a harmony of one kind or another. Observe, I am not at present speaking of this as artistical or desirable in itself, not as a characteristic of the great colorist, but as the aim of the simple follower of nature. For it is strange to see how marvellously nature varies the most general and simple of her tones. A mass of mountain seen against the light, may, at first, appear all of one blue ; and so it is, blue as a whole, by comparison with other parts of the landscape. But look how that blue is made up. There are black shadows in it under the crags, there are green shadows along the turf, there are gray half-lights upon the rocks, there are faint touches of stealthy warmth and cautious light along their edges ; every bush, every stone, every tuft of moss has its voice in the matter, and joins with individual character in the universal will. Who is there who can do this as Turner will? The old masters would have settled the matter at once with a transparent, agreeable, but monotonous gray. Many among the moderns would probably be equally monotonous with absurd and false colors. Turner only would give the uncertainty—the palpitating, perpetual change—the subjection of all to a great influence, without one part or portion being lost or merged in it—the unity of action with infinity of agent. And I wish to insist on this the more particularly, because it is one of the eternal principles of nature, that she will not have one line nor color, nor one portion nor atom of space without a change in it. There is not one of her shadows, tints, or lines that is not in a state of perpetual variation : I do not mean in time, but in space. There is not a leaf in the world which has the *same color* visible over its whole surface ; it has a white high light somewhere ; and in proportion as it curves to or from that focus, the color is brighter or grayer. Pick up a common flint from the roadside, and count, if you can, its changes and hues

§ 15. The variety and fulness even of his most simple tones.

§ 16. Following the infinite and unapproachable variety of nature.

of color. Every bit of bare ground under your feet has in it a thousand such—the gray pebbles, the warm ochre, the green of incipient vegetation, the grays and blacks of its reflexes and shadows, might keep a painter at work for a month, if he were obliged to follow them touch for touch: how much more, when the same infinity of change is carried out with vastness of object and space. The extreme of distance may appear at first monotonous; but the least examination will show it to be full of every kind of change—that its outlines are perpetually melting and appearing again—sharp here, vague there—now lost altogether, now just hinted and still confused among each other—and so forever in a state and necessity of change. Hence, wherever in a painting we have unvaried color extended even over a small space, there is falsehood. Nothing can be natural which is monotonous; nothing true which only tells one story. The brown foreground and rocks of Claude's Sinon before Priam are as false as color can be: first, because there never was such a brown under sunlight, for even the sand and cinders (volcanic tufa) about Naples, granting that he had studied from these ugliest of all formations, are, where they are fresh fractured, golden and lustrous in full light compared to these ideals of crag, and become, like all other rocks, quiet and gray when weathered; and secondly, because no rock that ever nature stained is without its countless breaking tints of varied vegetation. And even Stanfield, master as he is of rock form, is apt in the same way to give us here and there a little bit of mud, instead of stone.

§ 17. His dislike of purple and fondness for the opposition of yellow and black. The principles of nature in this respect.

What I am next about to say with respect to Turner's color, I should wish to be received with caution, as it admits of dispute. I think that the first approach to viciousness of color in any master is commonly indicated chiefly by a prevalence of purple, and an absence of yellow. I think nature mixes yellow with almost every one of her hues, never, or very rarely, using red without it, but frequently using yellow with scarcely any red; and I believe it will be in consequence found that her favorite opposition, that which generally characterizes and gives tone to her color, is yellow and black, passing, as it retires, into white and blue. It is beyond dispute that the great fundamental opposition of Rubens is yellow and black; and that on this, concentrated in one part of the picture, and modified in various grays throughout, chiefly depend the tones of all his finest works. And in Titian, though there is a far greater tendency to the purple than in Rubens, I believe no red is ever mixed with the pure blue, or glazed over it, which has not in it a modifying quantity of yellow. At all events, I am nearly certain that whatever rich and pure purples are introduced locally, by the great colorists, nothing is so destructive of all fine color as the slightest tendency to purple in general tone; and I am equally certain that Turner is distinguished from all the vicious colorists of the present day, by the foundation of all his tones being black, yellow, and the intermediate grays, while the tendency of our common glare-seekers is invariably to pure, cold, impossible purples. So fond indeed is Turner of black and yellow, that he has given us more than one composition, both drawings and paintings, based on these two colors alone, of which the magnificent Quillebœuf, which I consider one of the most perfect pieces of simple color existing, is a most striking example; and I think that where, as in some of the late Venices, there has been something like a marked appearance of purple tones, even though exquisitely corrected by vivid orange and warm green in the foreground, the general color has not been so perfect or truthful: my own feelings would always guide me rather to the warm grays of such pictures as the Snow Storm, or the glowing scarlet and gold of the Napoleon and Slave Ship. But I do not insist at present on this part of the subject, as being perhaps more proper for future examination, when we are considering the ideal of color.

The above remarks have been made entirely with reference to the recent Academy pictures, which have been chiefly attacked for their color. I by no means intend them to apply to the early works of Turner, those which the enlightened newspaper critics are perpetually talking about as characteristic of a time when Turner was "really great." He is, and was, really great, from the time when he first could hold a brush, but he never was so great as he is now. The Crossing the Brook, glorious as it is as a composition, and perfect in all that is most desirable and most ennobling in art, is scarcely to be looked upon as a piece of color; it is an agreeable, cool, gray rendering of space and form, but it is not color; if it be regarded as such, it is thoroughly false and vapid, and very far inferior to the tones of the same kind given by Claude. The reddish brown in the foreground of the Fall of Carthage, with all diffidence be it spoken, is, as far as my feelings are competent to judge, crude, sunless, and in every way wrong; and both this picture and the Building of Carthage, though this latter is far the finer of the two, are quite unworthy of Turner as a colorist.

§ 18. His early works are false in color.

Not so with the drawings; these, countless as they are, from the earliest to the latest, though presenting an unbroken chain of increasing difficulty overcome, and truth illustrated, are all, according to their aim, equally faultless as to color. Whatever we have hitherto said, applies to them in its fullest extent; though each, being generally the realization of some effect actually seen, and realized but once, requires almost a separate essay. As a class, they are far quieter and chaster than the Academy pictures, and, were they better known, might enable our connoisseurs to form a somewhat more accurate judgment of the intense study of nature on which all Turner's color is based.

§ 19. His drawings invariably perfect.

One point only remains to be noted respecting his system of color generally—its entire subordination to light and shade, a subordination which there is no need to prove here, as every engraving from his works—and few are unengraved—is sufficient demonstration of it. I have before shown the inferiority and unimportance in nature of color, as a truth, compared with light and shade. That inferiority is maintained and asserted by all really great works of color; but most by Turner's as their

§ 20. The subjection of his system of color to that of chiaroscuro.

color is most intense. Whatever brilliancy he may choose to assume, is subjected to an inviolable law of chiaroscuro, from which there is no appeal. No richness nor depth of tint is considered of value enough to atone for the loss of one particle of arranged light. No brilliancy of hue is permitted to interfere with the depth of a determined shadow. And hence it is, that while engravings from works far less splendid in color are often vapid and cold, because the little color employed has not been rightly based on light and shade, an engraving from Turner is always beautiful and forcible in proportion as the color of the original has been intense, and never in a single instance has failed to express the picture as a perfect composition.* Powerful and captivating and faith-

---

* This is saying too much; for it not unfrequently happens that the light and shade of the original is lost in the engraving, the effect of which is afterwards partially recovered, with the aid of the artist himself, by introductions of new features. Sometimes, when a drawing depends chiefly on color, the engraver gets unavoidably embarrassed, and must be assisted by some change or exaggeration of the effect; but the more frequent case is, that the engraver's difficulties result merely from his inattention to, or wilful deviations from his original; and that the artist is obliged to assist him by such expedients as the error itself suggests.

Not unfrequently in reviewing a plate, as very constantly in reviewing a picture after some time has elapsed since its completion, even the painter is liable to make unnecessary or hurtful changes. In the plate of the Old Temeraire, lately published in Finden's gallery, I do not know whether it was Turner or the engraver who broke up the water into sparkling ripple, but it was a grievous mistake, and has destroyed the whole dignity and value of the conception. The flash of lightning in the Winchelsea of the England series does not exist in the original; it is put in to withdraw the attention of the spectator from the sky which the engraver destroyed.

There is an unfortunate persuasion among modern engravers that color can be expressed by particular characters of line; and in the endeavor to distinguish by different lines, different colors of equal depth, they frequently lose the whole system of light and shade. It will hardly be credited that the piece of foreground on the left of Turner's Modern Italy, represented in the Art-Union engraving as nearly coal black, is in the original of a pale warm gray, hardly darker than the sky. All attempt to record color in engraving, is heraldry out of its place: the engraver has no power beyond that of expressing transparency or opacity ful as his color is, it is the least important of all his excellences, because it is the least important feature of nature. He paints in color, but he thinks in light and shade; and were it necessary, rather than lose one line of his forms, or one ray

---

by greater or less openness of line, (for the same depth of tint is producible by lines with very different intervals.)

Texture of surface is only in a measure in the power of the steel, and ought not to be laboriously sought after; nature's surfaces are distinguished more by form than texture; a stone is often smoother than a leaf; but if texture is to be given, let the engraver at least be sure that he knows what the texture of the object actually is, and how to represent it. The leaves in the foreground of the engraved Mercury and Argus have all of them three or four black lines across them. What sort of leaf texture is supposed to be represented by these? The stones in the foreground of Turner's Llanthony received from the artist the powdery texture of sandstone; the engraver covered them with contorted lines and turned them into old timber.

A still more fatal cause of failure is the practice of making out or finishing what the artist left incomplete. In the England plate of Dudley, there are two offensive blank windows in the large building with the chimney on the left. These *are* engraver's improvements; in the original they are barely traceable, their lines being excessively faint and tremulous as with the movement of heated air between them and the spectator: their vulgarity is thus taken away, and the whole building left in one grand unbroken mass. It is almost impossible to break engravers of this unfortunate habit. I have even heard of their taking journeys of some distance in order to obtain knowledge of the details which the artist intentionally omitted; and the evil will necessarily continue until they receive something like legitimate artistical education. In one or two instances, however, especially in small plates, they have shown great feeling; the plates of Miller (especially those of the Turner illustrations to Scott) are in most instances perfect and beautiful interpretations of the originals; so those of Goodall in Rogers's works, and Cousens's in the Rivers of France; those of the Yorkshire series are also very valuable, though singularly inferior to the drawings. But none even of these men appear capable of producing a large plate. They have no knowledge of the means of rendering their lines vital or valuable; cross-hatching stands for everything; and inexcusably, for though we cannot expect every engraver to etch like Rembrandt or Albert Durer, or every wood-cutter to draw like Titian, at least something of the system and power of the grand works of those men might be preserved, and some mind and meaning stolen into the reticulation of the restless modern lines.

of his sunshine, would, I apprehend, be content to paint in black and white to the end of his life. It is by mistaking the shadow for the substance, and aiming at the brilliancy and the fire, without perceiving of what deep-studied shade and inimitable form it is at once the result and the illustration, that the host of his imitators sink into deserved disgrace. With him, as with all the greatest painters, and in Turner's more than all, the hue is a beautiful auxiliary in working out the great impression to be conveyed, but is not the source nor the essence of that impression ; it is little more than a visible melody, given to raise and assist the mind in the reception of nobler ideas—as sacred passages of sweet sound, to prepare the feelings for the reading of the mysteries of God.

CHAPTER III.

OF TRUTH OF CHIAROSCURO.

It is not my intention to enter, in the present portion of the work, upon any examination of Turner's particular effects of light. We must know something about what is beautiful before we speak of these.

§ 1. We are not at present to examine particular effects of light.

At present I wish only to insist upon two great principles of chiaroscuro, which are observed throughout the works of the great modern master, and set at defiance by the ancients—great general laws, which may, or may not, be sources of beauty, but whose observance is indisputably necessary to truth.

Go out some bright sunny day in winter, and look for a tree with a broad trunk, having rather delicate boughs hanging down on the sunny side, near the trunk. Stand four or five yards from it, with your back to the sun. You will find that the boughs between you and the trunk of the tree are very indistinct, that you confound them in places with the trunk itself, and cannot possibly trace one of them from its insertion to its extremity. But the shadows which they cast upon the trunk, you will find clear, dark, and distinct, perfectly traceable through their whole course, except when they are interrupted by the crossing boughs. And if you retire backwards, you will come to a point where you cannot see the intervening boughs at all, or only a fragment of them here and there, but can still see their shadows perfectly plain. Now, this may serve to show you the immense prominence and importance of shadows where there is anything like bright light. They are, in fact, commonly far more conspicuous than the thing which casts them, for being as large as the casting object, and altogether made up of a blackness deeper than the darkest part of the casting object, (while that object is also broken up with positive and reflected lights,) their large, broad, unbroken spaces, tell strongly on the eye, especially as all form is rendered partially, often totally invisible within them, and as they are suddenly terminated by the sharpest lines which nature ever shows. For no outline of objects whatsoever is so sharp as the edge of a close shadow. Put your finger over a piece of white paper in the sun, and observe the difference between the softness of the outline of the finger itself and the decision of the edge of the shadow. And note also the excessive gloom of the latter. A piece of black cloth, laid in the light, will not attain one-fourth of the blackness of the paper under the shadow.

§ 2. And therefore the distinctness of shadows is the chief means of expressing vividness of light.

Hence shadows are in reality, when the sun is shining, the most conspicuous thing in a landscape, next to the highest lights. All forms are understood and explained chiefly by their agency: the roughness of the bark of a tree, for instance, is not seen in the light, nor in the shade; it is only seen between the two, where the shadows of the ridges explain it. And hence, if we have to express vivid light, our very first aim must be to get the shadows sharp and visible; and this is not to be done by blackness, (though indeed chalk on white paper is the only thing which comes up to the intensity of real shadows,) but by keeping them perfectly flat, keen, and even. A very pale shadow, if it be quite flat—if it conceal the details of the objects it crosses—if it be gray and cold compared to their color, and very sharp edged, will be far more conspicuous, and make everything out of it look a great deal more like sunlight, than a shadow ten times its depth, shaded off at the edge, and confounded with the color of the objects on which it falls. Now the old masters of the Italian school, in almost all their works, directly reverse this principle: they blacken their shadows till the picture becomes quite appalling, and everything in it invisible; but they make a point of losing their edges, and carrying them off by gradation; in consequence utterly destroying every appearance of sunlight. All their shadows are the faint, secondary darknesses of mere *daylight;* the sun has nothing whatever to do with them. The shadow between the pages of the book which you hold in your hand is distinct and visible enough, (though you are, I suppose, reading it by the ordinary daylight of your room,) out of the sun; and this weak and secondary shadow is all that we ever find in the Italian masters, as indicative of sunshine. Even Cuyp and Berghem, though they know thoroughly well what they are about in their foregrounds, forget the principle in their distances; and though in Claude's seaports, where he has plain architecture to deal with, he gives us something like real shadows along the stones, the moment we come to ground and foliage with lateral light, away go the shadows and the sun together. In the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, in our own gallery, the trunks of the trees between the water-wheel and the white figure in the middle distance, are dark and visible; but their shadows are scarcely discernible on the ground, and are quite vague and lost in the building. In nature, every bit of the shadow would have been darker than the darkest part of the trunks, and both on the ground and building would have been defined and conspicuous; while the trunks themselves would have been faint, confused, and indistinguishable, in their illumined parts, from the grass or distance. So in Poussin's Phocion, the shadow of the stick on the stone in the right-hand corner, is shaded off and lost, while you see the stick plain all the way. In nature's sun-

§ 3. Total absence of such distinctness in the works of the Italian school.

§ 4. And partial absence in the Dutch.

light it would have been the direct reverse—you would have seen the shadow black and sharp all the way down, but you would have had to look for the stick, which in all probability would in several places have been confused with the stone behind it.

And so throughout the works of Claude, Poussin, and Salvator, we shall find, especially in their conventional foliage, and unarticulated barbarisms of rock, that their whole sum and substance of chiaroscuro is merely the gradation and variation which nature gives in the *body* of her shadows, and that all which they do to express sunshine, she does to vary shade. They take only one step, while she always takes two ; marking, in the first place, with violent decision, the great transition from sun to shade, and then varying the shade itself with a thousand gentle gradations and double shadows, in themselves equivalent, and more than equivalent, to all that the old masters did for their entire chiaroscuro.

§ 5. The perfection of Turner's works in this respect.

Now if there be one principle, or secret more than another, on which Turner depends for attaining brilliancy of light, it is his clear and exquisite drawing of the *shadows.* Whatever is obscure, misty, or undefined in his objects or his atmosphere, he takes care that the shadows be sharp and clear—and then he knows that the light will take care of itself, and he makes them clear, not by blackness, but by excessive evenness, unity, and sharpness of edge. He will keep them clear and distinct, and make them felt as shadows, though they are so faint, that, but for their decisive forms, we should not have observed them for darkness at all. He will throw them one after another like transparent veils, along the earth and upon the air, till the whole picture palpitates with them, and yet the darkest of them will be a faint gray, imbued and penetrated with light. The pavement on the left of the Hero and Leander, is about the most thorough piece of this kind of sorcery that I remember in art ; but of the general principle, not one of his works is without constant evidence. Take the vignette of the garden opposite the title-page of

Rogers's Poems, and note the drawing of the nearest balustrade on the right. The balusters themselves are faint and misty, and the light through them feeble; but the shadows of them are sharp and dark, and the intervening light as intense as it can be left. And see how much more distinct the shadow of the running figure is on the pavement, than the checkers of the pavement itself. Observe the shadows on the trunk of the tree at page 91, how they conquer all the details of the trunk itself, and become darker and more conspicuous than any part of the boughs or limbs, and so in the vignette to Campbell's Beechtree's Petition. Take the beautiful concentration of all that is most characteristic of Italy as she is, at page 168 of Rogers's Italy, where we have the long shadows of the trunks made by far the most conspicuous thing in the whole foreground, and hear how Wordsworth, the keenest-eyed of all modern poets for what is deep and essential in nature, illustrates Turner here, as we shall find him doing in all other points.

> "At the root
> Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
> And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
> Oft stretches tow'rds me, like a long straight path,
> Traced faintly in the greensward."
>
> EXCURSION, Book VI.

So again in the Rhymer's Glen, (Illustrations to Scott,) note the intertwining of the shadows across the path, and the checkering of the trunks by them; and again on the bridge in the Armstrong's Tower; and yet more in the long avenue of Brienne, where we have a length of two or three miles expressed by the playing shadows alone, and the whole picture filled with sunshine by the long lines of darkness cast by the figures on the snow. The Hampton Court in the England series, is another very striking instance. In fact, the general system of execution observable in all Turner's drawings, is to work his grounds richly and fully, sometimes stippling, and giving infinity of delicate, mysterious, and ceaseless detail; and on the ground so prepared to cast his shadows with one dash of the brush, leaving an excessively sharp edge of watery color. Such at least is commonly the case in such coarse and broad instances as those I have above given. Words are not accurate enough, nor delicate enough to express or trace the constant, all-pervading influence of the finer and vaguer shadows throughout his works, that thrilling influence which gives to the light they leave, its passion and its power. There is not a stone, not a leaf, not a cloud, over which light is not felt to be actually passing and palpitating before our eyes. There is the motion, the actual wave and radiation of the darted beam—not the dull universal daylight, which falls on the landscape without life, or direction, or speculation, equal on all things and dead on all things; but the breathing, animated, exulting light, which feels, and receives, and rejoices, and acts—which chooses one thing and rejects another—which seeks, and finds, and loses again—leaping from rock to rock, from leaf to leaf, from wave to wave,—glowing, or flashing, or scintillating, according to what it strikes, or in its holier moods, absorbing and enfolding all things in the deep fulness of its repose, and then again losing itself in bewilderment, and doubt, and dimness; or perishing and passing away, entangled in drifting mist, or melted into melancholy air, but still,—kindling, or declining, sparkling or still, it is the living light, which breathes in its deepest, most entranced rest, which sleeps, but never dies.

§ 6. The effect of his shadows upon the light.

I need scarcely insist farther on the marked distinction between the works of the old masters and those of the great modern landscape-painters in this respect. It is one which the reader can perfectly well work out for himself, by the slightest systematic attention,—one which he will find existing, not merely between this work and that, but throughout the whole body of their productions, and down to every leaf and line. And a little careful watching of nature, especially in her foliage and foregrounds, and comparison of her with Claude, Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator, will soon show him that those artists worked entirely on conventional principles, not

§ 7. The distinction holds good between almost all the works of the ancient and modern schools.

representing what they saw, but what they thought would make a handsome picture; and even when they went to nature, which I believe to have been a very much rarer practice with them than their biographers would have us suppose, they copied her like children, drawing what they knew to be there, but not what they saw there.* I believe you may search the foregrounds of Claude, from one end of Europe to another, and you will not find the shadow of one leaf cast upon another. You will find leaf after leaf painted more or less boldly or brightly out of the black ground, and you will find dark leaves defined in perfect form upon the light; but you will not find the form of a single leaf disguised or interrupted by the shadow of another. And Poussin and Salvator are still farther from anything like genuine truth. There is nothing in their pictures which might not be manufactured in their painting-room, with a branch or two of brambles and a bunch or two of weeds before them, to give them the form of the leaves. And it is refreshing to turn from their ignorant and impotent repetitions of childish conception, to the clear, close, genuine studies of modern artists; for it is not Turner only, (though here, as in all other points, the first,) who is remarkable for fine and expressive decision of chiaroscuro. Some passages by J. D. Harding are thoroughly admirable in this respect, though this master is getting a little too much into a habit of general keen execution, which prevents the parts which ought to be especially decisive from being felt as such, and which makes his pictures, especially the large ones, look a little thin. But some of his later passages of rock foreground have, taken in the abstract, been beyond all praise, owing to the exquisite forms and firm expressiveness of their shadows. And the chiaroscuro of Stanfield is equally deserving of the most attentive study.

The second point to which I wish at present to direct attention has reference to the *arrangement* of light and shade. It is the constant habit of nature to use both her highest lights and deepest shadows in exceedingly small quantity;

---

* Compare Sect. II. Chap. II. § 6.

always in points, never in masses. She will give a large mass of tender light in sky or water, impressive by its quantity, and a large mass of tender shadow relieved against it, in foliage, or hill, or building; but the light is always subdued if it be extensive—the shadow always feeble if be broad. She will then fill up all the rest of her picture with middle tints and pale grays of some sort or another, and on this quiet and harmonious whole, she will touch her high lights in spots—the foam of an isolated wave—the sail of a solitary vessel—the flash of the sun from a wet roof—the gleam of a single whitewashed cottage—or some such sources of local brilliancy, she will use so vividly and delicately as to throw everything else into definite shade by comparison. And then taking up the gloom, she will use the black hollows of some overhanging bank, or the black dress of some shaded figure, or the depth of some sunless chink of wall or window, so sharply as to throw everything else into definite light by comparison; thus reducing the whole mass of her picture to a delicate middle tint, approaching, of course, here to light, and there to gloom; but yet sharply separated from the utmost degrees either of the one or the other.

§ 8. Second great principle of chiaroscuro. Both high light and deep shadow are used in equal quantity and only in points.

Now it is a curious thing that none of our writers on art seem to have noticed the great principle of nature in this respect. They all talk of deep shadow as a thing that may be given in quantity,—one-fourth of the picture, or, in certain effects, much more. Barry, for instance, says that the practice of the great painters, who "best understood the effects of chiaroscuro," was, for the most part, to make the mass of middle tint larger than the light, and the mass of dark larger than the masses of light and middle tint together, *i.e.*, occupying more than one-half of the picture. Now I do not know what we are to suppose is meant by "understanding chiaroscuro." If it means being able to manufacture agreeable patterns in the shape of pyramids, and crosses, and zigzags, into which arms and legs are to be

§ 9. Neglect or contradiction of this principle by writers on art.

persuaded, and passion and motion arranged, for the promotion and encouragement of the cant of criticism, such a principle may be productive of the most advantageous results. But if it means, being acquainted with the deep, perpetual, systematic, unintrusive simplicity and unwearied variety of nature's chiaroscuro—if it means the perception that blackness and sublimity are not synonymous, and that space and light may possibly be coadjutors—then no man, who ever advocated or dreamed of such a principle, is anything more than a novice, blunderer, and trickster in chiaroscuro. And my firm belief is, that though color is inveighed against by all artists, as the great Circe of art—the great transformer of mind into sensuality—no fondness for it, no study of it, is half so great a peril and stumbling-block to the young student, as the admiration he hears bestowed on such artificial, false, and juggling chiaroscuro, and the instruction he receives, based on such principles as that given us by Fuseli—that "mere natural light and shade, however separately or individually true, is not always legitimate chiaroscuro in art." It may not always be *agreeable* to a sophisticated, unfeeling, and perverted mind; but the student had better throw up his art at once, than proceed on the conviction that any other can ever be *legitimate.* I believe I shall be perfectly well able to prove, in following parts of the work, that "mere natural light and shade" is the only fit and faithful attendant of the highest art; and that all tricks—all visible, intended arrangement—all extended shadows and narrow lights—everything in fact, in the least degree artificial, or tending to make the mind dwell upon light and shade as such, is an injury, instead of an aid, to conceptions of high ideal dignity. I believe I shall be able also to show, that nature manages her chiaroscuro a great deal more neatly and cleverly than people fancy;—that "mere natural light and shade" is a very much finer thing than most artists can put together, and that none think they can improve upon it but those who never understood it.

§ 10. And consequent misguiding of the student.

But however this may be, it is beyond dispute that every

§ 11. The great value of a simple chiaroscuro.

permission given to the student to amuse himself with painting one figure all black, and the next all white, and throwing them out with a background of nothing—every permission given to him to spoil his pocketbook with sixths of sunshine and sevenths of shade, and other such fractional sublimities, is so much more difficulty laid in the way of his ever becoming a master ; and that none are in the right road to real excellence, but those who are struggling to render the simplicity, purity, and inexhaustible variety of nature's own chiaroscuro in open, cloudless daylight, giving the expanse of harmonious light—the speaking, decisive shadow—and the exquisite grace, tenderness, and grandeur of aerial opposition of local color and equally illuminated lines. No chiaroscuro is so difficult as this ; and none so noble, chaste, or impressive. On this part of the subject, however, I must not enlarge at present. I wish now only to speak of those great principles of chiaroscuro, which nature observes, even when she is most working for effect—when she is playing with thunderclouds and sunbeams, and throwing one thing out and obscuring another, with the most marked artistical feeling and intention ;—even then, she never forgets her great rule, to give precisely the same quantity of deepest shade which she does of highest light, and no more ; points of the one answering to points of the other, and both vividly conspicuous and separated from all the rest of the landscape.

§ 12. The sharp separation of nature's lights from her middle tint.

And it is most singular that this separation, which is the great source of brilliancy in nature, should not only be unobserved, but absolutely forbidden by our great writers on art, who are always talking about connecting the light with the shade by *imperceptible gradations.* Now so surely as this is done, all sunshine is lost, for imperceptible gradation from light to dark is the characteristic of objects seen out of sunshine, in what is, in landscape, shadow. Nature's principle of getting light is the direct reverse. She will cover her whole landscape with middle tint, in which she will have as many gradations as you please, and a great many more than you can paint ; but on this middle tint she touches her extreme lights, and extreme darks, isolated and sharp, so that the eye goes to them directly, and feels them to be key-notes of the whole composition. And although the dark touches are less attractive than the light ones, it is not because they are less distinct, but because they exhibit nothing ; while the bright touches are in parts where everything is seen, and where in consequence the eye goes to rest. But yet the high lights do not exhibit anything in themselves, they are too bright and dazzle the eye ; and having no shadows in them, cannot exhibit form, for form can only be seen by shadow of some kind or another. Hence the highest lights and deepest darks agree in this, that nothing is seen in either of them ; that both are in exceedingly small quantity, and both are marked and distinct from the middle tones of the landscape—the one by their brilliancy, the other by their sharp edges, even though many of the more energetic middle tints may approach their intensity very closely.

§ 13. The truth of Turner.

I need scarcely do more than tell you to glance at any one of the works of Turner, and you will perceive in a moment the exquisite observation of all these principles ; the sharpness, decision, conspicuousness, and excessively small quantity, both of extreme light and extreme shade, all the mass of the picture being graduated and delicate middle tint. Take up the Rivers of France, for instance, and turn over a few of the plates in succession.

1. Chateau Gaillard (vignette.)—Black figures and boats, points of shade ; sun-touches on castle, and wake of boat, of light. See how the eye rests on both, and observe how sharp and separate all the lights are, falling in spots, edged by shadow, but not melting off into it.

2 Orleans.—The crowded figures supply both points of shade and light. Observe the delicate middle tint of both in the whole mass of buildings, and compare this with the blackness of Canaletto's shadows, against which neither figures nor anything else can ever tell, as points of shade.

3. Blois.—White figures in boats, buttresses of bridge, dome of church on the right, for light ; woman on horse-

back, heads of boats, for shadow. Note especially the isolation of the light on the church dome.

4. Chateau de Blois.—Torches and white figures for light, roof of chapel and monks' dresses for shade.

5. Beaugency.—Sails and spire opposed to buoy and boats. An exquisite instance of brilliant, sparkling, isolated touches of morning light.

6. Amboise.—White sail and clouds; cypresses under castle.

7. Chauteau of Amboise.—The boat in the centre, with its reflections, needs no comment. Note the glancing lights under the bridge. This is a very glorious and perfect instance.

8. St. Julien, Tours.—Especially remarkable for its preservation of deep points of gloom, because the whole picture is one of extended shade.

I need scarcely go on. The above instances are taken as they happen to come, without selection. The reader can proceed for himself. I may, however, name a few cases of chiaroscuro more especially deserving of his study. Scene between Quilleboeuf and Villequier,—Honfleur,—Light Towers of the Héve,—On the Seine between Mantes and Vernon,—The Lantern at St. Cloud,—Confluence of Seine and Marne,—Troyes,—the first and last vignette, and those at pages 36, 63, 95, 184, 192, 203, of Rogers's poems; the first and second in Campbell, St. Maurice in the Italy, where note the black stork; Brienne, Skiddaw, Mayburgh, Melrose, Jedburgh, in the illustrations to Scott, and the vignettes to Milton, not because these are one whit superior to others of his works, but because the laws of which we have been speaking are more strikingly developed in them, and because they have been well engraved. It is impossible to reason from the larger plates, in which half the chiaroscuro is totally destroyed by the haggling, blackening, and "making out" of the engravers.

CHAPTER IV.

OF TRUTH OF SPACE:—FIRST, AS DEPENDENT ON THE FOCUS OF THE EYE.*

§ 1. Space is more clearly indicated by the drawing of objects than by their hue.

In the first chapter of this section I noticed the distinction between real aerial perspective, and that overcharged contrast of light and shade by which the old masters obtained their deceptive effect; and I showed that, though inferior to them in the precise quality or tone of aerial color, our great modern master is altogether more truthful in the expression of the proportionate relation of all his distances to one another. I am now about to examine those modes of expressing space, both in nature and art by far the most important, which are dependent, not on the relative hues of objects, but on the *drawing* of them: by far the most important, I say, because the most constant and certain; for nature herself is not always aerial. Local effects are frequent which interrupt and violate the laws of aerial tone, and induce strange deception in our ideas of distance. I have often seen the summit of a snowy mountain look nearer than its base, owing to the perfect clearness of the upper air. But the *drawing* of objects, that is to say, the degree in which their details and parts are distinct or confused, is an unfailing and certain criterion of their distance; and if this be rightly rendered in a painting, we shall have genuine truth of space, in spite of many errors in aerial tone; while, if this be neglected, all space will be destroyed, whatever dexterity of tint may be employed to conceal the defective drawing.

---

* I have left this chapter in its original place, because I am more than ever convinced of the truth of the position advanced in the 8th paragraph; nor can I at present assign any other cause, than that here given, for what is there asserted; and yet I cannot but think that I have allowed far too much influence to a change so slight as that which we insensibly make in the focus of the eye; and that the real justification of Turner's practice, with respect to some of his foregrounds, is to be elsewhere sought. I leave the subject, therefore, to the reader's consideration.

§ 2. It is impossible to see objects at unequal distances distinctly at one moment.

First, then, it is to be noticed, that the eye, like any other lens, must have its focus altered, in order to convey a distinct image of objects at different distances; so that it is totally impossible to see distinctly, at the same moment, two objects, one of which is much farther off than another. Of this, any one may convince himself in an instant. Look at the bars of your window-frame, so as to get a clear image of their lines and form, and you cannot, while your eye is fixed on them, perceive anything but the most indistinct and shadowy images of whatever objects may be visible beyond. But fix your eyes on those objects, so as to see them clearly, and though they are just beyond and apparently beside the window-frame, that frame will only be felt or seen as a vague, flitting, obscure interruption to whatever is perceived beyond it. A little attention directed to this fact will convince every one of its universality, and prove beyond dispute that objects at unequal distances cannot be seen together, not from the intervention of air or mist, but from the impossibility of the rays proceeding from both, converging to the same focus, so that the whole impression, either of one or the other, must necessarily be confused, indistinct, and inadequate.

§ 3. Especially such as are both comparatively near.

But, be it observed (and I have only to request that whatever I say may be tested by immediate experiment,) the difference of focus necessary is greatest within the first five hundred yards, and therefore, though it is totally impossible to see an object ten yards from the eye, and one a quarter of a mile beyond it, at the same moment, it is perfectly possible to see one a quarter of a mile off, and one five miles beyond it, at the same moment. The consequence of this is, practically, that in a real landscape, we can see the whole of what would be called the middle distance and distance together, with facility and clearness; but while we do so we can see nothing in the foreground beyond a vague and indistinct arrangement of lines and colors; and that if, on the contrary, we look at any foreground object, so as to receive a distinct impression of it, the distance and middle distance become all disorder and mystery.

And therefore, if in a painting our foreground is anything, our distance must be nothing, and *vice versa;* for if we represent our near and distant objects as giving both at once that distinct image to the eye, which we receive in nature from each, when we look at them separately; * and if we distinguish them from each other only by the air-tone; and indistinctness dependent on positive distance, we violate one of the most essential principles of nature; we represent that as seen at once which can only be seen by two separate acts of seeing, and tell a falsehood as gross as if we had represented four sides of a cubic object visible together.

§ 4. In painting, therefore, either the foreground or distance must be partially sacrificed.

Now, to this fact and principle, no landscape painter of the old school, as far as I remember, ever paid the slightest attention. Finishing their foregrounds clearly and sharply, and with vigorous impression on the eye, giving even the leaves of their bushes and grass with perfect edge and shape, they proceeded into the distance with equal attention to what they could

§ 5. Which not being done by the old masters, they could not express space.

---

* This incapacity of the eye must not be confounded with its incapability to comprehend a large portion of *lateral* space at once. We indeed can see, at any one moment, little more than one point, the objects beside it being confused and indistinct; but we need pay no attention to this in art, because we can see just as little of the picture as we can of the landscape without turning the eye, and hence any slurring or confusing of one part of it, laterally, more than another, is not founded on any truth of nature, but is an expedient of the artist—and often an excellent and desirable one—to make the eye rest where he wishes it. But as the touch expressive of a distant object is as near upon the canvas as that expressive of a near one, both are seen distinctly and with the same focus of the eye, and hence an immediate contradiction of nature results, unless one or other be given with an artificial and increased indistinctness, expressive of the appearance peculiar to the unadapted focus. On the other hand, it must be noted that the greater part of the effect above described is consequent not on variation of focus, but on the different angle at which near objects are seen by each of the two eyes, when both are directed towards the distance.

see of its details—they gave all that the eye can perceive in a distance, when it is fully and entirely devoted to it, and therefore, though masters of aerial tone, though employing every expedient that art could supply to conceal the intersection of lines, though caricaturing the force and shadow of near objects to throw them close upon the eye, they *never* succeeded in truly representing space. Turner introduced a new era in landscape art, by showing that the foreground might be sunk for the distance, and that it was possible to express immediate proximity to the spectator, without giving anything like completeness to the forms of the near objects. This is not done by slurred or soft lines, observe, (always the sign of vice in art,) but by a decisive imperfection, a firm, but partial assertion of form, which the eye feels indeed to be close home to it, and yet cannot rest upon, or cling to, nor entirely understand, and from which it is driven away of necessity, to those parts of distance on which it is intended to repose. And this principle, originated by Turner, though fully carried out by him only, has yet been acted on with judgment and success by several less powerful artists of the English school. Some six years ago, the brown moorland foregrounds of Copley Fielding were very instructive in this respect. Not a line in them was made out, not a single object clearly distinguishable. Wet broad sweeps of the brush, sparkling, careless, and accidental as nature herself, always truthful as far as they went, implying knowledge, though not expressing it, suggested everything, while they represented nothing. But far off into the mountain distance came the sharp edge and the delicate form; the whole intention and execution of the picture being guided and exerted where the great impression of space and size was to be given. The spectator was compelled to go forward into the waste of hills—there, where the sun broke wide upon the moor, he must walk and wander—he could not stumble and hesitate over the near rocks, nor stop to botanize on the first inches of his path.*

§ 6. But modern artists have succeeded in fully carrying out this principle.

---

* There is no inconsistency, observe, between this passage and what was before asserted respecting the necessity of botanical fidelity—where

And the impression of these pictures was always great and enduring, as it was simple and truthful. I do not know anything in art which has expressed more completely the force and feeling of nature in these particular scenes. And it is a farther illustration * of the principle we are insisting upon, that where, as in some of his later works, he has bestowed more labor on the foreground, the picture has lost both in space and sublimity. And among artists in general, who are either not aware of the principle, or fear to act upon it, (for it requires no small courage, as well as skill, to treat a foreground with that indistinctness and mystery which they have been accustomed to consider as characteristic of distance,) the foreground is not only felt, as every landscape painter will confess, to be the most embarrassing and unmanageable part of the picture, but, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, will go near to destroy the effect of the rest of the composition. Thus Callcott's Trent is severely injured by the harsh group of foreground figures; and Stanfield very rarely gets through an Academy picture without destroying much of its space, by too much determination of near form; while Harding constantly sacrifices his distance, and compels the spectator to dwell on the foreground altogether, though indeed, with such foregrounds as he gives us, we are most happy so to do. But it is in Turner only that we see

§ 7. Especially of Turner.

a bold and decisive choice of the distance and middle distance, as his great object of attention; and by him only that the foreground is united and adapted to it, not by any want of drawing, or coarseness, or carelessness of execution, but by the most precise and beautiful indication or suggestion of just so much of even the minutest forms as the eye can see when its focus is not adapted to them. And herein is another reason for the vigor and whole-

---

the foreground is the object of attention. Compare Part II. Sect I. Chap. VII. § 10:—"To paint mist rightly, space rightly, and light rightly, it may be often necessary to paint *nothing else* rightly."

* Hardly. It would have been so only had the recently finished foregrounds been as accurate in detail as they are abundant: they are painful, I believe, not from their finish, but their falseness.

ness of the effect of Turner's works at any distance ; while those of almost all other artists are sure to lose space as soon as we lose sight of the details.

§ 8. Justification of the want of drawing in Turner's figures.

And now we see the reason for the singular, and to the ignorant in art, the offensive execution of Turner's figures. I do not mean to assert that there is any reason whatsoever, for *bad* drawing, (though in landscape it matters exceedingly little ;) but that there is both reason and necessity for that *want* of drawing which gives even the nearest figures round balls with four pink spots in them instead of faces, and four dashes of the brush instead of hands and feet ; for it is totally impossible that if the eye be adapted to receive the rays proceeding from the utmost distance, and some partial impression from all the distances, it should be capable of perceiving more of the forms and features of near figures than Turner gives. And how absolutely necessary to the faithful representation of space this indecision really is, might be proved with the utmost ease by any one who had veneration enough for the artist to sacrifice one of his pictures to his fame ; who would take some one of his works in which the figures were most incomplete, and have them painted in by any of our delicate and first-rate figure painters, absolutely preserving every color and shade of Turner's group, so as not to lose one atom of the composition, but giving eyes for the pink spots, and feet for the white ones. Let the picture be so exhibited in the Academy, and even novices in art would feel at a glance that its truth of space was gone, that every one of its beauties and harmonies had undergone decomposition, that it was now a grammatical solecism, a painting of impossibilities, a thing to torture the eye, and offend the mind.

CHAPTER V.

OF TRUTH OF SPACE:—SECONDLY, AS ITS APPEARANCE IS DEPENDENT ON THE POWER OF THE EYE.

In the last chapter, we have seen how indistinctness of individual distances becomes necessary in order to express the adaptation of the eye to one or other of them; we have now to examine that kind of indistinctness which is dependent on real retirement of the object even when the focus of the eye is fully concentrated upon it. The first kind of indecision is that which belongs to all objects which the eye is not adapted to, whether near or far off: the second is that consequent upon the want of power in the eye to receive a clear image of objects at a great distance from it, however attentively it may regard them.

§ 1. The peculiar indistinctness dependent on the retirement of objects from the eye.

Draw on a piece of white paper, a square and a circle, each about a twelfth or eighth of an inch in diameter, and blacken them so that their forms may be very distinct; place your paper against the wall at the end of the room, and retire from it a greater or less distance according as you have drawn the figures larger or smaller. You will come to a point where, though you can see both the spots with perfect plainness, you cannot tell which is the square and which the circle.

Now this takes place of course with every object in a landscape, in proportion to its distance and size. The definite forms of the leaves of a tree, however sharply and separately they may appear to come against the sky, are quite indistinguishable at fifty yards off, and the form of everything becomes confused before we finally lose sight of it. Now if the character of an object, say the front of a house, be explained by a variety of forms in it, as the shadows in the tops of the windows, the lines of the architraves, the seams of the masonry, etc.; these lesser

§ 2. Causes confusion, but not annihilation of details.

details, as the object falls into distance, become confused and undecided, each of them losing their definite forms, but all being perfectly visible as something, a white or a dark spot or stroke, not lost sight of, observe, but yet so seen that we cannot tell what they are. As the distance increases, the confusion becomes greater, until at last the whole front of the house becomes merely a flat, pale space, in which, however, there is still observable a kind of richness and checkering, caused by the details in it, which, though totally merged and lost in the mass, have still an influence on the texture of that mass; until at last the whole house itself becomes a mere light or dark spot which we can plainly see, but cannot tell what it is, nor distinguish it from a stone or any other object.

§ 3. Instances in various objects.

Now what I particularly wish to insist upon, is the state of vision in which all the details of an object are seen, and yet seen in such confusion and disorder that we cannot in the least tell what they are, or what they mean. It is not mist between us and the object, still less is it shade, still less is it want of character; it is a confusion, a mystery, an interfering of undecided lines with each other, not a diminution of their number; window and door, architrave and frieze, all are there: it is no cold and vacant mass, it is full and rich and abundant, and yet you cannot see a single form so as to know what it is. Observe your friend's face as he is coming up to you; first it is nothing more than a white spot; now it is a face, but you cannot see the two eyes, nor the mouth, even as spots; you see a confusion of lines, a something which you know from experience to be indicative of a face, and yet you cannot tell how it is so. Now he is nearer, and you can see the spots for the eyes and mouth, but they are not blank spots neither; there is detail in them; you cannot see the lips, nor the teeth, nor the brows, and yet you see more than mere spots; it is a mouth and an eye, and there is light and sparkle and expression in them, but nothing distinct. Now he is nearer still, and you can see that he is like your friend, but you cannot tell whether he is or not; there is a vagueness and indecision of line still. Now you are sure, but even yet there are a thousand things in his face which have their effect in inducing the recognition, but which you cannot see so as to know what they are.

Changes like these, and states of vision corresponding to them, take place with each and all of the objects of nature, and two great principles of truth are deducible from their observation. First, place an object as close to the eye as you like, there is always something in it which you *cannot* see, except in the hinted and mysterious manner above described. You can see the texture of a piece of dress, but you cannot see the individual threads which compose it, though they are all felt, and have each of them influence on the eye. Secondly, place an object as far from the eye as you like, and until it becomes itself a mere spot, there is always something in it which you *can* see, though only in the hinted manner above described. Its shadows and lines and local colors are not lost sight of as it retires ; they get mixed and indistinguishable, but they are still there, and there is a difference always perceivable between an object possessing such details and a flat or vacant space. The grass blades of a meadow a mile off, are so far discernible that there will be a marked difference between its appearance and that of a piece of wood painted green. And thus nature is never distinct and never vacant, she is always mysterious, but always abundant ; you always see something, but you never see all.

§ 4. Two great resultant truths; that nature is never distinct, and never vacant.

And thus arise that exquisite finish and fulness which God has appointed to be the perpetual source of fresh pleasure to the cultivated and observant eye,—a finish which no distance can render invisible, and no nearness comprehensible ; which in every stone, every bough, every cloud, and every wave is multiplied around us, forever presented, and forever exhaustless. And hence in art, every space or touch in which we can see everything, or in which we can see nothing, is false. Nothing can be true which is either complete or vacant ; every touch is false which does not suggest more than it represents, and every space is false which represents nothing.

Now, I would not wish for any more illustrative or marked examples of the total contradiction of these two great principles, than the landscape works of the old masters, taken as a body:—the Dutch masters furnishing the cases of seeing everything, and the Italians of seeing nothing. The rule with both is indeed the same, differently applied. "You shall see the bricks in the wall, and be able to count them, or you shall see nothing but a dead flat;" but the Dutch give you the bricks, and the Italians the flat. Nature's rule being the precise reverse—"You shall never be able to count the bricks, but you shall never see a dead space."

§ 5. Complete violation of both these principles by the old masters. They are either distinct or vacant.

Take, for instance, the street in the centre of the really great landscape of Poussin (great in feeling at least) marked 260 in the Dulwich Gallery. The houses are dead square masses with a light side and a dark side, and black touches for windows. There is no suggestion of anything in any of the spaces, the light wall is dead gray, the dark wall dead gray, and the windows dead black. How differently would nature have treated us. She would have let us see the Indian corn hanging on the walls, and the image of the Virgin at the angles, and the sharp, broken, broad shadows of the tiled eaves, and the deep ribbed tiles with the doves upon them, and the carved Roman capital built into the wall, and the white and blue stripes of the mattresses stuffed out of the windows, and the flapping corners of the mat blinds. All would have been there; not as such, not like the corn, nor blinds, nor tiles, not to be comprehended nor understood, but a confusion of yellow and black spots and strokes, carried far too fine for the eye to follow, microscopic in its minuteness, and filling every atom and part of space with mystery, out of which would have arranged itself the general impression of truth and life.

§ 6. Instances from Nicholas Poussin.

Again, take the distant city on the right bank of the river in Claude's Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, in the National Gallery. I have seen many cities in my life, and drawn not a few; and I have seen

§ 7. From Claude.

many fortifications, fancy ones included, which frequently supply us with very new ideas indeed, especially in matters of proportion ; but I do not remember ever having met with either a city or a fortress *entirely* composed of round towers of various heights and sizes, all fac-similes of each other, and absolutely agreeing in the number of battlements. I have, indeed, some faint recollection of having delineated such an one in the first page of a spelling-book when I was four years old ; but, somehow or other, the dignity and perfection of the ideal were not appreciated, and the volume was not considered to be increased in value by the frontispiece. Without, however, venturing to doubt the entire sublimity of the same ideal as it occurs in Claude, let us consider how nature, if she had been fortunate enough to originate so perfect a conception, would have managed it in its details. Claude has permitted us to see every battlement, and the first impulse we feel upon looking at the picture is to count how many there are. Nature would have given us a peculiar confused roughness of the upper lines, a multitude of intersections and spots, which we should have known from experience was indicative of battlements, but which we might as well have thought of creating as of counting. Claude has given you the walls below in one dead void of uniform gray. There is nothing to be seen, nor felt, nor guessed at in it ; it is gray paint or gray shade, whichever you may choose to call it, but it is nothing more. Nature would have let you see, nay, would have compelled you to see, thousands of spots and lines, not one to be absolutely understood or accounted for, but yet all characteristic and different from each other ; breaking lights on shattered stones, vague shadows from waving vegetation, irregular stains of time and weather, mouldering hollows, sparkling casements—all would have been there—none, indeed, seen as such, none comprehensible or like themselves, but all visible ; little shadows, and sparkles, and scratches, making that whole space of color a transparent, palpitating, various infinity.

Or take one of Poussin's extreme distances, such as that in the Sacrifice of Isaac. It is luminous, retiring, delicate and perfect in tone, and is quite complete enough to deceive and delight the careless eye to which all distances are alike ; nay, it is perfect and masterly, and absolutely right if we consider it as a sketch,—as a first plan of a distance, afterwards to be carried out in detail. But we must remember that all these alternate spaces of gray and gold are not the landscape itself, but the treatment of it—not its substance, but its light and shade. They are just what nature would cast over it, and write upon it with every cloud, but which she would cast in play, and without carefulness, as matters of the very smallest possible importance. All her work and her attention would be given to bring out from underneath this, and through this, the forms and the material character which this can only be valuable to illustrate, not to conceal. Every one of those broad spaces she would linger over in protracted delight, teaching you fresh lessons in every hairsbreadth of it, and pouring her fulness of invention into it, until the mind lost itself in following her,— now fringing the dark edge of the shadow with a tufted line of level forest—now losing it for an instant in a breath of mist—then breaking it with the white gleaming angle of a narrow brook—then dwelling upon it again in a gentle, mounded, melting undulation, over the other side of which she would carry you down into a dusty space of soft, crowded light, with the hedges, and the paths, and the sprinkled cottages and scattered trees mixed up and mingled together in one beautiful, delicate, impenetrable mystery—sparkling and melting, and passing away into the sky, without one line of distinctness, or one instant of vacancy.

§ 8. And G. Poussin.

Now it is, indeed, impossible for the painter to follow all this—he cannot come up to the same degree and order of infinity—but he can give us a lesser kind of infinity. He has not one-thousandth part of the space to occupy which nature has ; but he can, at least, leave no part of that space vacant and unprofitable. If nature carries out her minutiæ over miles, he

§ 9. The imperative necessity, in landscape painting, of fulness and finish.

has no excuse for generalizing in inches. And if he will only give us all he can, if he will give us a fulness as complete and as mysterious as nature's, we will pardon him for its being the fulness of a cup instead of an ocean. But we will not pardon him, if, because he has not the mile to occupy, he will not occupy the inch, and because he has fewer means at his command, will leave half of those in his power unexerted. Still less will we pardon him for mistaking the sport of nature for her labor, and for following her only in her hour of rest, without observing how she has worked for it. After spending centuries in raising the forest, and guiding the river, and modelling the mountain, she exults over her work in buoyancy of spirit, with playful sunbeam and flying cloud ; but the painter must go through the same labor, or he must not have the same recreation. Let him chisel his rock faithfully, and tuft his forest delicately, and then we will allow him his freaks of light and shade, and thank him for them ; but we will not be put off with the play before the lesson—with the adjunct instead of the essence—with the illustration instead of the fact.

§ 10. Breadth is not vacancy.

I am somewhat anticipating my subject here, because I can scarcely help answering the objections which I know must arise in the minds of most readers, especially of those who are *partially* artistical, respecting "generalization," "breadth," "effect," etc. It were to be wished that our writers on art would not dwell so frequently on the necessity of breadth, without explaining what it means ; and that we had more constant reference made to the principle which I can only remember having seen once clearly explained and insisted on,—that breadth is not vacancy. Generalization is unity, not destruction of part ; and composition is not annihilation, but arrangement of materials. The breadth which unites the truths of nature with her harmonies, is meritorious and beautiful ; but the breadth which annihilates those truths by the million, is not painting nature, but painting over her. And so the masses which result from right concords and relations of details, are sublime and impressive ; but the masses which result from the eclipse of details are contemptible and painful.* And we shall show, in following parts of the work, that distances like those of Poussin are mere meaningless tricks of clever execution, which, when once discovered, the artist may repeat over and over again, with mechanical contentment and perfect satisfaction, both to himself and to his superficial admirers, with no more exertion of intellect nor awakening of feeling than any tradesman has in multiplying some ornamental pattern of furniture. Be this as it may, however, (for we cannot enter upon the discussion of the question here,) the falsity and imperfection of such distances admit of no dispute. Beautiful and ideal they may be ; true they are not : and in the same way we might go through every part and portion of the works of the old masters, showing throughout, either that you have every leaf and blade of grass staring defiance to the mystery of nature, or that you have dead spaces of absolute vacuity, equally determined in their denial of her fulness. And even if we ever find (as here and there, in their better pictures, we do) changeful passages of agreeable playing color, or mellow and transparent modulations of mysterious atmosphere, even here the touches, though satisfactory to the eye, are suggestive of nothing,—they are characterless,—they have none of the peculiar expressiveness and meaning by which nature maintains the variety and interest even of what she most conceals. She always tells a story, however hintedly and vaguely ; each of her touches is different from all the others; and we feel with every one, that though we cannot tell what it is, it cannot be *anything ;* while even the most dexterous distances of the old masters pretend to secrecy without having anything to conceal, and are ambiguous, not from the concentration of meaning, but from the want of it.

And now, take up one of Turner's distances, it matters not which, or of what kind,—drawing or painting, small or great, done thirty years ago, or for last year's Academy, as you like; say that of the Mercury and Argus, and look if every fact which I have just been pointing out in nature be not carried out in it. Abundant, beyond the power of the eye to embrace or follow, vast and various, beyond the power of the mind to comprehend, there is yet not one atom in its whole extent and mass which does not suggest more than it represents; nor does it suggest vaguely, but in such a manner as to prove that the conception of each individual inch of that distance is absolutely clear and complete in the master's mind, a separate picture fully worked out: but yet, clearly and fully as the idea is formed, just so much of it is given, and no more, as nature would have allowed us to feel or see; just so much as would enable a spectator of experience and knowledge to understand almost every minute fragment of separate detail, but appears, to the unpractised and careless eye, just what a distance of nature's own would appear, an unintelligible mass. Not one line out of the millions there is without meaning, yet there is not one which is not affected and disguised by the dazzle and indecision of distance. No form is made out, and yet no form is unknown.

---

* Of course much depends upon the kind of detail so lost. An artist may generalize the trunk of a tree, where he only loses lines of bark, and do us a kindness ; but he must not generalize the details of a champaign, in which there is a history of creation. The full discussion of the subject belongs to a future part of our investigation.

§ 11. The fulness and mystery of Turner's distances.

Perhaps the truth of this system of drawing is better to be understood by observing the distant character of rich architecture, than of any other object. Go to the top of Highgate Hill on a clear summer morning at five o'clock, and look at Westminster Abbey. You will receive an impression of a building enriched with multitudinous vertical lines. Try to distinguish one of those lines all the way down from the one next to it: You cannot. Try to count them: You cannot. Try to make out the beginning or end of any one of them: You cannot. Look at it generally, and it is all symmetry and arrangement. Look at it in its parts, and it is all inextricable confusion. Am not I, at this moment, describing a piece of Turner's drawing, with the same words by which I describe nature? And what would one of the old masters

§ 12. Farther illustrations in architectural drawing.

have done with such a building as this in his distance? Either he would only have given the shadows of the buttresses, and the light and dark sides of the two towers, and two dots for the windows; or if more ignorant and more ambitious, he had attempted to render some of the detail, it would have been done by distinct lines,—would have been broad caricature of the delicate building, felt at once to be false, ridiculous, and offensive. His most successful effort would only have given us, through his carefully toned atmosphere, the effect of a colossal parish church, without one line of carving on its economic sides. Turner, and Turner only, would follow and render on the canvas that mystery of decided line,—that distinct, sharp, visible, but unintelligible and inextricable richness, which, examined part by part, is to the eye nothing but confusion and defeat, which, taken as a whole, is all unity, symmetry, and truth.*

§ 13. In near objects as well as distances.

Nor is this mode of representation true only with respect to distances. Every object, however near the eye, has something about it which you cannot see, and which brings the mystery of distance even into every part and portion of what we suppose ourselves to see most distinctly. Stand in the Piazza di St. Marco at Venice, as close to the church as you can, without losing sight of the top of it. Look at the capitals of the columns on the second story. You see that they are exquisitely rich, carved all over. Tell me their patterns: You cannot. Tell me the direction of a single line in them: You cannot. Yet you see a multitude of lines, and you have so much feeling of a certain tendency and arrangement in those lines, that you are quite sure the capitals are beautiful, and that they are all different from each other. But I defy you to make out one single line in any one of them. Now go to Canaletto's painting of this church,

§ 14. Vacancy and falsehood of Canaletto.

---

* Vide, for illustration, Fontainebleau, in the Illustrations to Scott; Vignette at opening of Human Life, in Rogers's Poems; Venice, in the Italy; Chateau de Blois; the Rouen, and Pont Neuf, Paris, in the Rivers of France. The distances of all the Academy pictures of Venice, especially the Shylock, are most instructive.

in the Palazzo Manfrini, taken from the very spot on which you stood. How much has he represented of all this? A black dot under each capital for the shadow, and a yellow one above it for the light. There is not a vestige nor indication of carving or decoration of any sort or kind.

Very different from this, but erring on the other side, is the ordinary drawing of the architect, who gives the principal lines of the design with delicate clearness and precision, but with no uncertainty or mystery about them; which mystery being removed, all space and size are destroyed with it, and we have a drawing of a model, not of a building. But in the capital lying on the foreground in Turner's Daphne hunting with Leucippus, we have the perfect truth. Not one jag of the acanthus leaves is absolutely visible, the lines are all disorder, but you feel in an instant that all are there. And so it will invariably be found through every portion of detail in his late and most perfect works.

§ 15. Still greater fulness and finish in landscape foregrounds.

But if there be this mystery and inexhaustible finish merely in the more delicate instances of architectural decoration, how much more in the ceaseless and incomparable decoration of nature. The detail of a single weedy bank laughs the carving of ages to scorn. Every leaf and stalk has a design and tracery upon it,—every knot of grass an intricacy of shade which the labor of years could never imitate, and which, if such labor could follow it out even to the last fibres of the leaflets, would yet be falsely represented, for, as in all other cases brought forward, it is not clearly seen, but confusedly and mysteriously. That which is nearness for the bank, is distance for its details; and however near it may be, the greater part of those details are still a beautiful incomprehensibility.*

---

* It is to be remembered, however, that these truths present themselves in all probability under very different phases to individuals of different powers of vision. Many artists who appear to generalize rudely or rashly are perhaps faithfully endeavoring to render the appearance which nature bears to sight of limited range. Others may be lead by their singular keenness of sight into inexpedient detail. Works which are painted for effect at a certain distance must be always seen at dis-

Hence, throughout the picture, the expression of space and size is dependent upon obscurity, united with, or rather

---

advantage by those whose sight is of different range from the painter's. Another circumstance to which I ought above to have alluded is the scale of the picture; for there are different degrees of generalization, and different necessities of symbolism, belonging to every scale: the stipple of the miniature painter would be offensive on features of the life size, and the leaves which Tintoret may articulate on a canvas of sixty feet by twenty-five, must be generalized by Turner on one of four by three. Another circumstance of some importance is the assumed distance of the foreground; many landscape painters seem to think their nearest foreground is always equally near, whereas its distance from the spectator varies not a little, being always at least its own calculable breadth from side to side as estimated by figures or any other object of known size at the nearest part of it. With Claude almost always; with Turner often, as in the Daphne and Leucippus, this breadth is forty or fifty yards; and as the nearest foreground object *must* then be at least that distance removed, and *may* be much more, it is evident that no completion of close detail is in such cases allowable, (see here another proof of Claude's erroneous practice;) with Titian and Tintoret, on the contrary, the foreground is rarely more than five or six yards broad. and its objects therefore being only five or six yards distant are entirely detailed.

None of these circumstances, however, in any wise affect the great principle, the confusion of detail taking place sooner or later in all cases. I ought to have noted, however, that many of the pictures of Turner in which the confused drawing has been least understood, have been luminous *twilights;* and that the uncertainty of twilight is therefore added to that of general distance. In the evenings of the south it not unfrequently happens that objects touched with the reflected light of the western sky, continue even for the space of half an hour after sunset, glowing, ruddy, and intense in color, and almost as bright as if they were still beneath actual sunshine, even till the moon begins to cast a shadow: but in spite of this brilliancy of color all the details become ghostly and ill-defined. This is a favorite moment of Turner's, and he invariably characterizes it, not by gloom, but by uncertainty of detail. I have never seen the effect of clear twilight thoroughly rendered by art; that effect in which all details are lost, while intense clearness and light are still felt in the atmosphere, in which nothing is distinctly seen, and yet it is not darkness, far less mist, that is the cause of concealment. Turner's efforts at rendering this effect (as the Wilderness of Engedi, Assos, Chateau de Blois, Caer-laverock, and others innumerable,) have always some slight appearance of mistiness, owing to the indistinctness of details; but it remains to be shown that any closer approximation to the effect is possible.

resultant from, exceeding fulness. We destroy both space and size, either by the vacancy, which affords us no measure of space, or by the distinctness, which gives us a false one. The distance of Poussin, having no indication of trees, nor of meadows, nor of character of any kind, may be fifty miles off, or may be five ; we cannot tell—we have no measure, and in consequence, no vivid impression. But a middle distance of Hobbima's involves a contradiction in terms ; it states a distance by perspective, which it contradicts by distinctness of detail.

§ 16. Space and size are destroyed alike by distinctness and by vacancy.

§ 17. Swift execution best secures perfection of details.

§ 18. Finish is far more necessary in landscape than in historical subjects.

A single dusty roll of Turner's brush is more truly expressive of the infinity of foliage, than the niggling of Hobbima could have rendered his canvas, if he had worked on it till doomsday. What Sir J. Reynolds says of the misplaced labor of his Roman acquaintance on separate leaves of foliage, and the certainty he expresses that a man who attended to general character would in five minutes produce a more faithful representation of a tree, than the unfortunate mechanist in as many years, is thus perfectly true and well founded ; but this is not because details are undesirable, but because they are best given by swift execution, and because, individually, they cannot be given at all. But it should be observed (though we shall be better able to insist upon this point in future) that much of harm and error has arisen from the supposition and assertions of swift and brilliant historical painters, that the same principles of execution are entirely applicable to landscape, which are right for the figure. The artist who falls into extreme detail in drawing the human form, is apt to become disgusting rather than pleasing. It is more agreeable that the general outline and soft hues of flesh should alone be given, than its hairs, and veins, and lines of intersection. And even the most rapid and generalizing expression of the human body, if directed by perfect knowledge, and rigidly faithful in drawing, will commonly omit very little of what is agreeable or impressive. But the exclusively generalizing landscape painter omits the whole of what is valuable in his subject,—

omits thoughts, designs, and beauties by the million, everything, indeed, which can furnish him with variety or expression. A distance in Lincolnshire, or in Lombardy, might both be generalized into such blue and yellow stripes as we see in Poussin ; but whatever there is of beauty or character in either, depends altogether on our understanding the details, and feeling the difference between the morasses and ditches of the one, and the rolling sea of mulberry trees of the other. And so in every part of the subject. I have no hesitation in asserting that it is *impossible* to go too fine, or think too much about details in landscape, so that they be rightly arranged and rightly massed ; but that it is equally impossible to render anything like the fulness or the space of nature, except by that mystery and obscurity of execution which she herself uses, and in which Turner only has followed her.

§ 19. Recapitulation of the section.

We have now rapidly glanced at such general truths of nature as can be investigated without much knowledge of what is beautiful. Questions of arrangement, massing, and generalization, I prefer leaving untouched, until we know something about details, and something about what is beautiful. All that is desirable, even in these mere technical and artificial points, is based upon truths and habits of nature ; but we cannot understand those truths until we are acquainted with the specific forms and minor details which they affect, or out of which they arise. I shall, therefore, proceed to examine the invaluable and essential truths of specific character and form—briefly and imperfectly, indeed, as needs must be, but yet at length sufficient to enable the reader to pursue, if he will, the subject for himself.

SECTION III.

OF TRUTH OF SKIES.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE OPEN SKY.

§ 1. The peculiar adaptation of the sky to the pleasing and teaching of man.

It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organization; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great ugly black rain cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them, he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he be always with them ; but the sky is for all ; bright as it is, it is not "too bright, nor good, for human nature's daily food ;" it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for the soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together ; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us, is as distinct, as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential. And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations ; we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than to brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intention of the Supreme, that we are to receive more from the covering vault than the light and the dew which we share with the weed and the worm, only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accident, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of ? One says it has been wet, and another it has been windy, and another it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday ? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain ? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves ? All has passed, unregretted as unseen ; or if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary ; and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are de-

§ 2. The carelessness with which its lessons are received.

§ 3. The most essential of these lessons are the gentlest.

veloped. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lampblack and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, and the calm, and the perpetual,—that which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood,—things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally, which are never wanting, and never repeated, which are to be found always yet each found but once ; it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given. These are what the artist of highest aim must study ; it is these, by the combination of which his ideal is to be created ; these, of which so little notice is ordinarily taken by common observers, that I fully believe, little as people in general are concerned with art, more of their ideas of sky are derived from pictures than from reality, and that if we could examine the conception formed in the minds of most educated persons when we talk of clouds, it would frequently be found composed of fragments of blue and white reminiscences of the old masters.

§ 4. Many of our ideas of sky altogether conventional.

I shall enter upon the examination of what is true in sky at greater length, because it is the only part of a picture of which all, if they will, may be competent judges. What I may have to assert respecting the rocks of Salvator, or the boughs of Claude, I can scarcely prove, except to those whom I can immure for a month or two in the fastnesses of the Apennines, or guide in their summer walks again and again through the ravines of Sorrento. But what I say of the sky can be brought to an immediate test by all, and I write the more decisively, in the hope that it may be so.

Let us begin then with the simple open blue of the sky. This is of course the color of the pure atmospheric air, not the aqueous vapor, but the pure azote and oxygen, and it is the total color of the whole mass of that air between us and the void of space. It is modified by the varying quantity of aqueous vapor suspended in it, whose color, in its most imperfect, and

§ 5. Nature and essential qualities of the open blue.

therefore most visible, state of solution, is pure white, (as in steam,) which receives, like any other white, the warm hues of the rays of the sun, and, according to its quantity and imperfect solution, makes the sky paler, and at the same time more or less gray, by mixing warm tones with its blue. This gray aqueous vapor, when very decided, becomes mist, and when local, cloud. Hence the sky is to be considered as a transparent blue liquid, in which, at various elevations, clouds are suspended, those clouds being themselves only particular visible spaces of a substance with which the whole mass of this liquid is more or less impregnated. Now, we all know this perfectly well, and yet we so far forget it in practice, that we little notice the constant connection kept up by nature between her blue and her clouds, and we are not offended by the constant habit of the old masters, of considering the blue sky as totally distinct in its nature, and far separated from the vapors which float in it. With them, cloud is cloud, and blue is blue, and no kind of connection between them is ever hinted at. The sky is thought of as a clear, high material dome, the clouds as separate bodies, suspended beneath it, and in consequence, however delicate and exquisitely removed in tone their skies may be, you always look *at* them, not *through* them. Now, if there be one characteristic of the sky more valuable or necessary to be rendered than another, it is that which Wordsworth has given in the second book of the Excursion :—

§ 6. Its connection with clouds.

§ 7. Its exceeding depth.

> “ The chasm of sky above my head
> Is Heaven’s profoundest azure. No domain
> For fickle, short-lived clouds, to occupy,
> Or to pass through ; —but rather an *abyss*
> In which the everlasting stars abide,
> And whose soft gloom and boundless depth, might tempt
> The curious eye to look for them by day.”

And, in his American Notes, I remember Dickens notices the same truth, describing himself as lying drowsily on the barge deck, looking not at, but *through* the sky. And if you look intensely at the pure blue of a serene sky, you will see that there is a variety and fulness in its very repose. It is not flat dead color, but a deep, quivering, transparent body of penetrable air, in which you trace or imagine short, falling spots of deceiving light, and dim shades, faint, veiled vestiges of dark vapor; and it is this trembling transparency which our great modern master has especially aimed at and given. His blue is never laid on in smooth coats, but in breaking, mingling, melting hues, a quarter of an inch of which, cut off from all the rest of the picture, is still *spacious*, still infinite and immeasurable in depth. It is a painting of the air, something into which you can see, through the parts which are near you into those which are far off; something which has no surface, and through which we can plunge far and farther, and without stay or end, into the profundity of space;—whereas, with all the old landscape painters, except Claude, you may indeed go a long way before you come to the sky, but you will strike hard against it at last. A perfectly genuine and untouched sky of Claude is indeed most perfect, and beyond praise, in all qualities of air; though even with him, I often feel rather that there is a great deal of pleasant air between me and the firmament, than that the firmament itself is only air. I do not mean, however, to say a word against such skies as that of the Enchanted Castle, or that marked 30 in the National Gallery, or one or two which I remember at Rome; but how little and by how few these fine passages of Claude are appreciated, is sufficiently proved by the sufferance of such villainous and unpalliated copies as we meet with all over Europe, like the Marriage of Isaac, in our own Gallery, to remain under his name. In fact, I do not remember above ten pictures of Claude's, in which the skies, whether repainted or altogether copies, or perhaps from Claude's hand, but carelessly laid in, like that marked 241, Dulwich Gallery, were not fully as feelingless and false as those of other masters; while, with the Poussins, there are no favorable exceptions. Their skies are systematically wrong; take,

§ 8. These qualities are especially given by modern masters.

§ 9. And by Claude.

for instance, the sky of the Sacrifice of Isaac. It is here high noon, as is shown by the shadow of the figures; and what sort of color is the sky at the top of the picture? Is it pale and gray with heat, full of sunshine, and unfathomable in depth? On the contrary, it is of a pitch of darkness which, except on the Mont Blanc or Chimborazo, is as purely impossible as color can be. He might as well have painted it coal black; and it is laid on with a dead coat of flat paint, having no one quality or resemblance of sky about it. It cannot have altered, because the land horizon is as delicate and tender in tone as possible, and is evidently unchanged; and to complete the absurdity of the whole thing, this color holds its own, without graduation or alteration, to within three or four degrees of the horizon, where it suddenly becomes bold and unmixed yellow. Now the horizon at noon may be yellow when the whole sky is covered with dark clouds, and only *one* open streak of light left in the distance from which the whole light proceeds; but with a clear, open sky, and opposite the sun, at noon, such a yellow horizon as this is physically impossible. Even supposing that the upper part of the sky were pale and warm, and that the transition from the one hue to the other were effected imperceptibly and gradually, as is invariably the case in reality, instead of taking place within a space of two or three degrees;—even then, this gold yellow would be altogether absurd; but as it is, we have in this sky (and it is a fine picture—one of the best of Gaspar's that I know,) a notable example of the truth of the old masters—two impossible colors impossibly united! Find such a color in Turner's noonday zenith as the blue at the top, or such a color at a noonday horizon as the yellow at the bottom, or such a connection of any colors whatsoever as that in the centre, and then you may talk about his being false to nature if you will. Nor is this a solitary instance; it is Gaspar Poussin's favorite and characteristic effect. I remember twenty such, most of them worse than this, in the downright surface and opacity of blue. Again, look at the large Cuyp in the

§ 10. Total absence of them in Poussin. Physical errors in his general treatment of open sky.

§ 11. Errors of Cuyp in graduation of color.

Dulwich Gallery, which Mr. Hazlitt considers the "finest in the world," and of which he very complimentarily says, "The tender green of the valleys, the gleaming lake, the purple light of the hills, have an effect like the *down* on an unripe nectarine!" I ought to have apologized before now, for not having studied sufficiently in Covent Garden to be provided with terms of correct and classical criticism. One of my friends begged me to observe, the other day, that Claude was "pulpy;" another added the yet more gratifying information that he was "juicy;" and it is now happily discovered that Cuyp is "downy." Now I dare say that the sky of this first-rate Cuyp is very like an unripe nectarine: all that I have to say about it is, that it is exceedingly unlike a sky. The blue remains unchanged and ungraduated over three-fourths of it, down to the horizon; while the sun, in the left-hand corner, is surrounded with a halo, first of yellow, and then of crude pink, both being separated from each other, and the last from the blue, as sharply as the belts of a rainbow, and both together not ascending ten degrees in the sky. Now it is difficult to conceive how any man calling himself a painter could impose such a thing on the public, and still more how the public can receive it, as a representation of that sunset purple which invariably extends its influence to the zenith, so that there is no pure blue anywhere, but a purple increasing in purity gradually down to its point of greatest intensity, (about forty-five degrees from the horizon,) and then melting imperceptibly into the gold, the three colors extending their influence over the whole sky; so that throughout the whole sweep of the heaven, there is no one spot where the color is not in an equal state of transition—passing from gold into orange, from that into rose, from that into purple, from that into blue, with absolute equality of change, so that in no place can it be said, "here it changes," and in no place, "here it is unchanging." This is invariably the case. There is no such thing—there never was, and never will be such a thing, while God's heaven remains as it is made—as a serene, sunset sky, with its purple and rose in *belts* about the sun.

Such bold, broad examples of ignorance as these would soon set aside all the claims of the professed landscape painters to truth, with whatever delicacy of color or manipulation they may be disguised. But there are some skies, of the Dutch school, in which clearness and coolness have been aimed at, instead of depth; and some introduced merely as backgrounds to the historical subjects of the older Italians, which there is no matching in modern times; one would think angels had painted them, for all is now clay and oil in comparison. It seems as if we had totally lost the art, for surely otherwise, however little our painters might aim at it or feel it, they would touch the chord sometimes by accident; but they never do, and the mechanical incapacity is still more strongly evidenced by the muddy struggles of the unhappy Germans, who have the feeling, partially strained, artificial, and diseased, indeed, but still genuine enough to bring out the tone, if they had the mechanical means and technical knowledge. But, however they were obtained, the clear tones of this kind of the older Italians are glorious and enviable in the highest degree; and we shall show, when we come to speak of the beautiful, that they are one of the most just grounds of the fame of the old masters.

§ 12. The exceeding value of the skies of the early Italian and Dutch schools. Their qualities are unattainable in modern times.

But there is a series of phenomena connected with the open blue of the sky, which we must take especial notice of, as it is of constant occurrence in the works of Turner and Claude, the effects, namely, of visible sunbeams. It will be necessary for us thoroughly to understand the circumstances under which such effects take place.

§ 13. Phenomena of visible sunbeams. Their nature and cause.

Aqueous vapor or mist, suspended in the atmosphere, becomes visible exactly as dust does in the air of a room. In the shadows you not only cannot see the dust itself, because unillumined, but you can see other objects through the dust without obscurity, the air being thus actually rendered more transparent by a deprivation of light. Where a sunbeam enters, every particle of dust becomes visible, and a palpable interruption to the sight, so that a transverse sunbeam is a real obstacle to the vision, you cannot see things clearly through it.

In the same way, wherever vapor is illuminated by transverse rays there it becomes visible as a whiteness more or less affecting the purity of the blue, and destroying it exactly in proportion to the degree of illumination. But where vapor is in shade, it has very little effect on the sky, perhaps making it a little deeper and grayer than it otherwise would be, but not itself, unless very dense, distinguishable or felt as mist.

§ 14. They are only illuminated mist, and cannot appear when the sky is free from vapor, nor when it is without clouds.

The appearance of mist or whiteness in the blue of the sky, is thus a circumstance which more or less accompanies sunshine, and which, supposing the quantity of vapor constant, is greatest in the brightest sunlight. When there are no clouds in the sky, the whiteness, as it affects the whole sky equally, is not particularly noticeable. But when there are clouds between us and the sun, the sun being low, those clouds cast shadows along and through the mass of suspended vapor. Within the space of these shadows, the vapor, as above stated, becomes transparent and invisible, and the sky appears of a pure blue. But where the sunbeams strike, the vapor becomes visible in the form of the beams, occasioning those radiating shafts of light which are one of the most valuable and constant accompaniments of a low sun. The denser the mist, the more distinct and sharp-edged will these rays be ; when the air is very clear, they are mere vague, flushing, gradated passages of light ; when it is very thick, they are keen-edged and decisive in a high degree.

We see then, first, that a quantity of mist dispersed through the whole space of the sky, is necessary to this phenomenon ; and secondly, that what we usually think of as beams of greater brightness than the rest of the sky, are in reality only a part of that sky in its natural state of illumination, cut off and rendered brilliant by the shadows from the clouds,—that these shadows are in reality the source of the appearance of beams,—that, therefore, no part of the sky can present such an appearance, except when there are broken clouds between it and the sun; and lastly, that the shadows cast from such clouds are not necessarily gray or dark, but very nearly of the natural pure blue of a sky destitute of vapor.

§ 15. Erroneous tendency in the representation of such phenomena by the old masters.

Now, as it has been proved that the appearance of beams can only take place in a part of the sky which has clouds between it and the sun, it is evident that no appearance of beams can ever begin from the orb itself, except when there is a cloud or solid body of some kind between us and it; but that such appearances will almost invariably begin on the dark side of some of the clouds around it, the orb itself remaining the centre of a broad blaze of united light. Wordsworth has given us in two lines, the only circumstances under which rays can ever appear to have origin in the orb itself:—

> "But rays of light,
> Now *suddenly* diverging from the orb,
> *Retired behind the mountain tops, or veiled*
> *By the dense air*, shot upwards."
>
> EXCURSION, Book IX.

And Turner has given us the effect magnificently in the Dartmouth of the River Scenery. It is frequent among the old masters, and constant in Claude; though the latter, from drawing his beams too fine, represents the effect upon the dazzled eye rather than the light which actually exists, and approximates very closely to the ideal which we see in the sign of the Rising Sun; nay, I am nearly sure that I remember cases in which he has given us the diverging beam, without any cloud or hill interfering with the orb.

§ 16. The ray which appears in the dazzled eye should not be represented.

It may, perhaps, be somewhat difficult to say how far it is allowable to represent that kind of ray which is seen by the dazzled eye. It is very certain that we never look towards a bright sun without seeing glancing rays issue from it; but it is equally certain that those rays are no more real existences than the red and blue circles which we see after having been so dazzled, and that if we are to represent the rays we ought also to

§ 17. The practice of Turner. His keen perception of the more delicate phenomena of rays.

§ 18. The total absence of any evidence of such perception in the works of the old masters.

cover our sky with pink and blue circles. I should on the whole consider it utterly false in principle to represent the visionary beam, and that we ought only to show that which has actual existence. Such we find to be the constant practice of Turner. Even where, owing to interposed clouds, he has beams appearing to issue from the orb itself, they are broad bursts of light, not spiky rays; and his more usual practice is to keep all near the sun in one simple blaze of intense light, and from the first clouds to throw beams to the zenith, though he often does not permit any appearance of rays until close to the zenith itself. Open at the 80th page of the Illustrated edition of Rogers's poems. You have there a sky blazing with sunbeams; but they all begin a long way from the sun, and they are accounted for by a mass of dense clouds surrounding the orb itself. Turn to the 7th page. Behind the old oak, where the sun is supposed to be, you have only a blaze of undistinguished light; but up on the left, over the edge of the cloud, on its dark side, the sunbeam. Turn to page 192,—blazing rays again, but all beginning where the clouds do, not one can you trace to the sun; and observe how carefully the long shadow on the mountain is accounted for by the dim dark promontory projecting out near the sun. I need not multiply examples; you will find various modifications and uses of these effects throughout his works. But you will not find a single trace of them in the old masters. They give you the rays issuing from behind black clouds, and because they are a coarse and common effect which could not possibly escape their observation, and because they are easily imitated. They give you the spiky shafts issuing from the orb itself, because these are partially symbolical of light, and assist a tardy imagination, as two or three rays scratched round the sun with a pen would, though they would be rays of darkness instead of light.* But of the most beautiful phenomenon of all, the appearance of the delicate ray far in the sky, threading its way among the thin, transparent clouds, while all around the sun is unshadowed fire, there is no record nor example whatsoever in their works. It was too delicate and spiritual for them; probably their blunt and feelingless eyes never perceived it in nature, and their untaught imaginations were not likely to originate it in the study.

---

* I have left this passage as it stood originally, because it is right as far as it goes; yet it speaks with too little respect of symbolism, which is often of the highest use in religious art, and in some measure is allow-

§ 19. Truth of the skies of modern drawings.

Little is to be said of the skies of our other landscape artists. In paintings, they are commonly toneless, crude, and wanting in depth and transparency; but in drawings, some very perfect and delicate examples have been produced by various members of the old water color Society, and one or two others; but with respect to the qualities of which we are at present speaking, it is not right to compare drawings with paintings, as the wash or spunging, or other artifices peculiar to water color, are capable of producing an appearance of quality which it needs much higher art to produce in oils.

§ 20. Recapitulation. The best skies of the ancients are, in *quality*, inimitable, but in rendering of various truth, childish.

Taken generally, the open skies of the moderns are inferior in quality to picked and untouched skies of the greatest of the ancients, but far superior to the average class of pictures which we have every day fathered upon their reputation. Nine or ten skies of Claude might be named which are not to be contended with, in their way, and as many of Cuyp. Teniers has given some very wonderful passages, and

---

able in all art. In the works of almost all the greatest masters there are portions which are explanatory rather than representative, and typical rather than imitative; nor could these be parted with but at infinite loss. Note, with respect to the present question, the daring black sunbeams of Titian, in his woodcut of St. Francis receiving the stigmata, and compare here Part III. Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 18; Chap. V. § 13. And though I believe that I am right in considering all such symbolism as out of place in pure landscape, and in attributing that of Claude to ignorance or inability, and not to feeling, yet I praise Turner not so much for his absolute refusal to represent the spiky ray about the sun, as for his perceiving and rendering that which Claude never perceived, the multitudinous presence of radiating light in the upper sky, and on all its countless ranks of subtile cloud.

the clearness of the early Italian and Dutch schools is beyond all imitation. But the common blue daubing which we hear every day in our best galleries attributed to Claude and Cuyp, and the genuine skies of Salvator, and of both the Poussins, are not to be compared for an instant with the best works of modern times, even in quality and transparency; while in all matters requiring delicate observation or accurate science,—in all which was not attainable by technicalities of art, and which depended upon the artist's knowledge and understanding of nature, all the works of the ancients are alike the productions of mere children, sometimes manifesting great sensibility, but proving at the same time, feebly developed intelligence and ill-regulated observation.

CHAPTER II.

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS: — FIRST, OF THE REGION OF THE CIRRUS.

§ 1. Difficulty of ascertaining wherein the truth of clouds consists.

Our next subject of investigation must be the specific character of clouds, a species of truth which is especially neglected by artists; first, because as it is within the limits of possibility that a cloud may assume almost any form, it is difficult to point out, and not always easy to feel, wherein error consists; and secondly, because it is totally impossible to study the forms of clouds from nature with care and accuracy, as a change in the subject takes place between every touch of the following pencil, and parts of an outline sketched at different instants cannot harmonize, nature never having intended them to come together. Still if artists were more in the habit of sketching clouds rapidly, and as accurately as possible in the outline, from nature, instead of daubing down what they call "effects" with the brush, they would soon find there is more beauty about their forms than can be arrived at by any random felicity of invention, however brilliant, and more essential character than can be violated without incurring the charge of falsehood,—falsehood as direct and definite, though not as traceable as error in the less varied features of organic form.

The first and most important character of clouds, is dependent on the different altitudes at which they are formed. The atmosphere may be conveniently considered as divided into three spaces, each inhabited by clouds of specific character altogether different, though, in reality, there is no distinct limit fixed between them by nature, clouds being formed at *every* altitude, and partaking according to their altitude, more or less of the characters of the upper or lower regions. The scenery of the sky is thus formed of an infinitely graduated series of systematic forms of cloud, each of which has its own region in which alone it is formed, and each of which has specific characters which can only be properly determined by comparing them as they are found clearly distinguished by intervals of considerable space. I shall therefore consider the sky as divided into three regions—the upper region, or region of the cirrus; the central region, or region of the stratus; the lower region, or the region of the rain-cloud.

§ 2. Variation of their character at different elevations. The three regions to which they may conveniently be considered as belonging.

The clouds which I wish to consider as included in the upper region, never touch even the highest mountains of Europe, and may therefore be looked upon as never formed below an elevation of at least 15,000 feet; they are the motionless multitudinous lines of delicate vapor with which the blue of the open sky is commonly streaked or speckled after several days of fine weather. I must be pardoned for giving a detailed description of their specific characters as they are of constant occurrence in the works of modern artists, and I shall have occasion to speak frequently of them in future parts of the work. Their chief characters are—first, Symmetry: They are nearly always arranged in some definite and evident order, commonly in long ranks reaching sometimes from the zenith to the horizon, each rank composed of an infinite number of transverse bars of about the

§ 3. Extent of the upper region.

§ 4. The symmetrical arrangement of its clouds.

same length, each bar thickest in the middle, and terminating in a traceless vaporous point at each side ; the ranks are in the direction of the wind, and the bars of course at right angles to it ; these latter are commonly slightly bent in the middle. Frequently two systems of this kind, indicative of two currents of wind, at different altitudes intersect one another, forming a network. Another frequent arrangement is in groups of excessively fine, silky, parallel fibres, commonly radiating, or having a tendency to radiate, from one of their extremities, and terminating in a plumy sweep at the other :—these are vulgarly known as "mares' tails." The plumy and expanded extremity of these is often bent upwards, sometimes back and up again, giving an appearance of great flexibility and unity at the same time, as if the clouds were tough, and would hold together however bent. The narrow extremity is invariably turned to the wind, and the fibres are parallel with its direction. The upper clouds always fall into some modification of one or other of these arrangements. They thus differ from all other clouds, in having a plan and system ; whereas other clouds, though there are certain laws which they cannot break, have yet perfect freedom from anything like a relative and general system of government. The upper clouds are to the lower, what soldiers on parade are to a mixed multitude ; no men walk on their heads or their hands, and so there are certain laws which no clouds violate ; but there is nothing except in the upper clouds resembling symmetrical discipline.

§ 5. Their exceeding delicacy.

Secondly, Sharpness of Edge : The edges of the bars of the upper clouds which are turned to the wind, are often the sharpest which the sky shows ; no outline whatever of any other kind of cloud, however marked and energetic, ever approaches the delicate decision of these edges. The outline of a black thunder-cloud is striking, from the great energy of the color or shade of the general mass ; but as a line, it is soft and indistinct, compared with the edge of the cirrus, in a clear sky with a brisk breeze. On the other hand, the edge of the bar turned away from the wind is always soft, often imperceptible, melting into the blue interstice between it and its next neighbor. Commonly the sharper one edge is, the softer is the other, and the clouds look flat, and as if they slipped over each other like the scales of a fish. When both edges are soft, as is always the case when the sky is clear and windless, the cloud looks solid, round, and fleecy.

§ 6. Their number.

Thirdly, Multitude : The delicacy of these vapors is sometimes carried into such an infinity of division, that no other sensation of number that the earth or heaven can give is so impressive. Number is always most felt when it is symmetrical, (vide Burke on "Sublime," Part ii. sect. 8,) and, therefore, no sea-waves nor fresh leaves make their number so evident or so impressive as these vapors. Nor is nature content with an infinity of bars or lines alone—each bar is in its turn severed into a number of small undulatory masses, more or less connected according to the violence of the wind. When this division is merely effected by undulation, the cloud exactly resembles sea-sand ribbed by the tide ; but when the division amounts to real separation we have the mottled or mackerel skies. Commonly, the greater the division of its bars, the broader and more shapeless is the rank or field, so that in the mottled sky it is lost altogether, and we have large irregular fields of equal size, masses like flocks of sheep ; such clouds are three or four thousand feet below the legitimate cirrus. I have seen them cast a shadow on the Mont Blanc at sunset, so that they must descend nearly to within fifteen thousand feet of the earth.

§ 7. Causes of their peculiarly delicate coloring.

Fourthly, Purity of Color : The nearest of these clouds—those over the observer's head, being at least three miles above him, and nearly all entering the ordinary sphere of vision, farther from him still,—their dark sides are much grayer and cooler than those of other clouds, owing to their distance. They are composed of the purest aqueous vapor, free from all foulness of earthy gases, and of this in the lightest and most ethereal state in which it can be, to be visible. Farther, they receive the light of the sun in a state of far greater intensity than lower objects, the beams being transmitted to them through atmospheric air far less dense, and wholly unaffected by mist, smoke, or any other impurity. Hence their colors are more pure and vivid, and their white less sullied than those of any other clouds.

§ 8. Their variety of form.

Lastly, Variety: Variety is never so conspicuous, as when it is united with symmetry. The perpetual change of form in other clouds, is monotonous in its very dissimilarity, nor is difference striking where no connection is implied; but if through a range of barred clouds, crossing half the heaven, all governed by the same forces and falling into one general form, there be yet a marked and evident dissimilarity between each member of the great mass—one more finely drawn, the next more delicately moulded, the next more gracefully bent—each broken into differently modelled and variously numbered groups, the variety is doubly striking, because contrasted with the perfect symmetry of which it forms a part. Hence, the importance of the truth, that nature never lets one of the members of even her most disciplined groups of cloud be like another; but though each is adapted for the same function, and in its great features resembles all the others, not one, out of the millions with which the sky is checkered, is without a separate beauty and character, appearing to have had distinct thought occupied in its conception, and distinct forces in its production; and in addition to this perpetual invention, visible in each member of each system, we find systems of separate cloud intersecting one another, the sweeping lines mingled and interwoven with the rigid bars, these in their turn melting into banks of sand-like ripple and flakes of drifted and irregular foam; under all, perhaps the massy outline of some lower cloud moves heavily across the motionless buoyancy of the upper lines, and indicates at once their elevation and their repose.

§ 9. Total absence of even the slightest effort at their representation, in ancient landscape.

Such are the great attributes of the upper cloud region; whether they are beautiful, valuable, or impressive, it is not our present business to decide, nor to endeavor to discover the reason of the somewhat remarkable fact, that the whole field of ancient landscape art affords, as far as we remember, but one instance of any effort whatever to represent the character of this cloud region. That one instance is the landscape of Rubens in our own gallery, in which the mottled or fleecy sky is given with perfect truth and exquisite beauty. To this should perhaps be added, some of the backgrounds of the historical painters, where horizontal lines were required, and a few level bars of white or warm color cross the serenity of the blue. These, as far as they go, are often very perfect, and the elevation and repose of their effect might, we should have thought, have pointed out to the landscape painters that there was something (I do not say much, but certainly something) to be made out of the high clouds. Not one of them, however, took the hint. To whom, among them all, can we look for the slightest realization of the fine and faithful descriptive passage of the "Excursion," already alluded to :—

> "But rays of light,
> Now suddenly diverging from the orb,
> Retired behind the mountain tops, or veiled
> By the dense air, shot upwards to the crown
> Of the blue firmament—aloft—and wide :
> And multitudes of little floating clouds,
> Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
> Through their ethereal texture, had become
> Vivid as fire,—Clouds separately poised,
> Innumerable multitude of forms
> Scattered through half the circle of the sky ;
> And giving back, and shedding each on each,
> With prodigal communion, the bright hues
> Which from the unapparent fount of glory
> They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
> That which the heavens displayed the liquid deep
> Repeated, but with unity sublime."

§ 10. The intense and constant study of them by Turner.

There is but one master whose works we can think of while we read this ; one alone has taken notice of the neglected upper sky ; it is his peculiar and favorite field ; he has watched its every modification, and given its every phase and feature ; at all hours, in all seasons, he has followed its passions and its changes, and has brought down and laid open to the world another apocalypse of heaven.

There is scarcely a painting of Turner's, in which serenity of sky and intensity of light are aimed at together, in which these clouds are not used, though there are not two cases in which they are used altogether alike. Sometimes they are crowded together in masses of mingling light, as in the Shylock; every part and atom sympathizing in that continuous expression of slow movement which Shelley has so beautifully touched :—

> "Underneath the young gray dawn
> A multitude of dense, white fleecy clouds,
> Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
> *Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind.*"

At other times they are blended with the sky itself, felt only here and there by a ray of light calling them into existence out of its misty shade, as in the Mercury and Argus; sometimes, where great repose is to be given, they appear in a few detached, equal, rounded flakes, which seem to hang motionless, each like the shadow of the other, in the deep blue of the zenith, as in the Acro-Corinth; sometimes they are scattered in fiery flying fragments, each burning with separate energy, as in the Temeraire; sometimes woven together with fine threads of intermediate darkness, melting into the blue as in the Napoleon. But in all cases the exquisite manipulation of the master gives to each atom of the multitude its own character and expression. Though they be countless as leaves, each has its portion of light, its shadow, its reflex, its peculiar and separating form.

Take for instance the illustrated edition of Rogers's Poems,* and open it at the 80th page, and observe how every attribute which I have pointed out in the upper sky, is there rendered with the faithfulness of a mirror ; the long lines of parallel bars, the delicate curvature from the wind, which the inclination of the sail shows you to be from the west ; the excessive sharpness of every edge which is turned to the wind, the faintness of every opposite one, the breaking up of each bar into rounded masses, and finally, the inconceivable variety with which individual form has been given to every member of the multitude, and not only individual form, but roundness and substance even where there is scarcely a hairbreadth of cloud to express it in. Observe, above everything, the varying indication of space and depth in the whole, so that you may look through and through from one cloud to another, feeling not merely how they retire to the horizon, but how they melt back into the recesses of the sky ; every interval being filled with absolute air, and all its spaces so melting and fluctuating, and fraught with change as with repose, that as you look, you will fancy that the rays shoot higher and higher into the vault of light, and that the pale streak of horizontal vapor is melting away from the cloud that it crosses. Now watch for the next barred sunrise, and take this vignette to the window, and test it by nature's own clouds, among which you will find forms and passages, I do not say merely *like*, but apparently the actual originals of parts of this very drawing. And with whom will you do this, except with Turner? Will you do it with Claude, and set that blank square yard of blue, with its round, white, flat fixtures of similar cloud, beside the purple infinity of nature, with her countless multitude of shadowy lines, and flaky waves, and folded veils of variable mist? Will you do it with Poussin, and set those massy steps of unyielding solidity, with the chariot-and-four driving up them, by the side of the delicate forms which terminate in threads too fine for the eye to follow them, and of texture so thin woven that the earliest stars shine through them? Will you do it with Salvator, and set that volume of violent and restless manufactory smoke beside those calm and quiet bars, which pause in the heaven as if they would never leave it more?

---

* I use this work frequently for illustration, because it is the only one I know in which the engraver has worked with delicacy enough to give the real forms and touches of Turner. I can reason from these plates, (in questions of form only,) nearly as well as I could from the drawings.

§ 11. His vignette, Sunrise on the Sea.

Now we have just seen how Turner uses the sharp-edged cirri when he aims at giving great transparency of air. But it was shown in the preceding chapter that sunbeams, or the appearance of them, are always sharper in their edge in proportion as the air is more misty, as they are most defined in a room where there is most dust flying about in it. Consequently, in the vignette we have been just noticing, where transparency is to be given, though there is a blaze of light, its beams are never edged; a tendency to rays is visible, but you cannot in any part find a single marked edge of a rising sunbeam, the sky is merely more flushed in one place than another. Now let us see what Turner does when he wants mist. Turn to the Alps at Daybreak, page 193, in the same book. Here we have the cirri used again, but now they have no sharp edges, they are all fleecy and mingling with each other, though every one of them has the most exquisite indication of individual form, and they melt back, not till they are lost in exceeding light, as in the other plate, but into a mysterious, fluctuating, shadowy sky, of which, though the light penetrates through it all, you perceive every part to be charged with vapor. Notice particularly the half-indicated forms even where it is most serene, behind the snowy mountains. And now, how are the sunbeams drawn? no longer indecisive, flushing, palpitating, every one is sharp and clear, and terminated by definite shadow; note especially the marked lines on the upper cloud; finally, observe the difference in the mode of indicating the figures, which are here misty and indistinguishable, telling only as shadows, though they are near and large, while those in the former vignette came clear upon the eye, though they were so far off as to appear mere points.

§ 12. His use of the cirrus in expressing mist.

Now is this perpetual consistency in all points, this concentration of every fact which can possibly bear upon what we are to be told, this watchfulness of the entire meaning and system of nature, which fills every part and space of the picture with coincidences of witness, which come out upon us, as they would

§ 13. His consistency in every minor feature.

from the reality, more fully and deeply in proportion to the knowledge we possess and the attention we give, admirable or not? I could go on writing page after page on every sky of Turner's, and pointing out fresh truths in every one. In the Havre, for instance, of the Rivers of France we have a new fact pointed out to us with respect to these cirri, namely, their being so faint and transparent as not to be distinguishable from the blue of the sky, (a frequent case,) except in the course of a sunbeam, which, however, does not illumine their edges, they being not solid enough to reflect light, but penetrates their whole substance, and renders them flat, luminous forms in its path, instantly and totally lost at its edge. And thus a separate essay would be required by every picture, to make fully understood the new phenomena which it treated and illustrated. But after once showing what are the prevailing characteristics of these clouds, we can only leave it to the reader to trace them wherever they occur. There are some fine and characteristic passages of this kind of cloud given by Stanfield, though he dares not use them in multitude, and is wanting in those refined qualities of form which it is totally impossible to explain in words, but which, perhaps, by simple outlines, on a large scale, selected from the cloud forms of various artists, I may in following portions of the work illustrate with the pencil.

§ 14. The color of the upper clouds.

Of the colors of these clouds I have spoken before, (Sec. I. Chap. II.;) but though I then alluded to their purity and vividness, I scarcely took proper notice of their variety; there is indeed in nature variety in all things, and it would be absurd to insist on it in each case, yet the colors of these clouds are so marvellous in their changefulness, that they require particular notice. If you watch for the next sunset, when there are a considerable number of these cirri in the sky, you will see, especially at the zenith, that the sky does not remain of the same color for two inches together; one cloud has a dark side of cold blue, and a fringe of milky white; another, above it, has a dark side of purple and an edge of red; another, nearer the sun, has an under-side of orange and an edge of gold; these you will find mingled with, and passing into the blue of the sky, which in places you will not be able to distinguish from the cool gray of the darker clouds, and which will be itself full of gradation, now pure and deep, now faint and feeble; and all this is done, not in large pieces, nor on a large scale, but over and over again in every square yard, so that there is no single part nor portion of the whole sky which has not in itself variety of color enough for a separate picture, and yet no single part which is like another, or which has not some peculiar source of beauty, and some peculiar arrangement of color of its own. Now, instead of this, you get in the old masters—Cuyp, or Claude, or whoever they may be—a field of blue, delicately, beautifully, and uniformly shaded down to the yellow sun, with a certain number of similar clouds, each with a dark side of the same gray, and an edge of the same yellow. I do not say that nature never does anything like this, but I say that her *principle* is to do a great deal more, and that what she does more than this,—what I have above described, and what you may see in nine sunsets out of ten,—has been observed, attempted, and rendered by Turner only, and by him with a fidelity and force which presents us with more essential truth, and more clear expression and illustration of natural laws, in every wreath of vapor, than composed the whole stock of heavenly information, which lasted Cuyp and Claude their lives.

§ 15. Recapitulation.

We close then our present consideration of the upper clouds, to return to them when we know what is beautiful; we have at present only to remember that of these clouds, and the truths connected with them, none before Turner had taken any notice whatsoever; that had they therefore been even feebly and imperfectly represented by him, they would yet have given him a claim to be considered more extended and universal in his statement of truths than any of his predecessors; how much more when we find that deep fidelity in his studied and perfect skies which opens new sources of delight to every advancement of our knowledge, and to every added moment of our contemplation.

CHAPTER III.

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS:—SECONDLY, OF THE CENTRAL CLOUD REGION.

§ 1. Extent and typical character of the central cloud region.

We have next to investigate the character of the Central Cloud Region, which I consider as including all clouds which are the usual characteristic of ordinary serene weather, and which touch and envelop the mountains of Switzerland, but never affect those of our own island; they may therefore be considered as occupying a space of air ten thousand feet in height, extending from five to fifteen thousand feet above the sea.

These clouds, according to their elevation, appear with great variety of form, often partaking of the streaked or mottled character of the higher region, and as often, when the precursors of storm, manifesting forms closely connected with the lowest rain clouds; but the species especially characteristic of the central region is a white, ragged, irregular, and scattered vapor, which has little form and less color, and of which a good example may be seen in the largest landscape of Cuyp, in the Dulwich Gallery. When this vapor collects into masses, it is partially rounded, clumsy, and ponderous, as if it would tumble out of the sky, shaded with a dull gray, and totally devoid of any appearance of energy or motion. Even in nature, these clouds are comparatively uninteresting, scarcely worth raising our heads to look at; and on canvas, valuable only as a means of introducing light, and breaking the monotony of blue; yet they are, perhaps, beyond all others the favorite clouds of the Dutch masters. Whether they had any motive for the adoption of such materials, beyond the extreme facility with which acres of canvas might thus be covered without any troublesome exertion of thought; or any temptation

§ 2. Its characteristic clouds, requiring no attention nor thought for their representation, are therefore favorite subjects with the old masters.

to such selections beyond the impossibility of error where nature shows no form, and the impossibility of deficiency where she shows no beauty, it is not here the place to determine. Such skies are happily beyond the reach of criticism, for he who tells you nothing cannot tell you a falsehood. A little flake-white, glazed with a light brush over the carefully toned blue, permitted to fall into whatever forms chance might determine, with the single precaution that their edges should be tolerably irregular, supplied, in hundreds of instances, a sky quite good enough for all ordinary purposes—quite good enough for cattle to graze, or boors to play at nine-pins—and equally devoid of all that could gratify, inform, or offend.

§ 3. The clouds of Salvator and Poussin.

But although this kind of cloud is, as I have said, typical of the central region, it is not one which nature is fond of. She scarcely ever lets an hour pass without some manifestation of finer forms, sometimes approaching the upper cirri, sometimes the lower cumulus. And then in the lower outlines, we have the nearest approximation which nature ever presents to the clouds of Claude, Salvator, and Poussin, to the characters of which I must request especial attention, as it is here only that we shall have a fair opportunity of comparing their skies with those of the modern school. I shall, as before, glance rapidly at the great laws of specific form, and so put it in the power of the reader to judge for himself of the truth of representation.

§ 4. Their essential characters.

Clouds, it is to be remembered, are not so much local vapor, as vapor rendered locally visible by a fall of temperature. Thus a cloud, whose parts are in constant motion, will hover on a snowy mountain, pursuing constantly the same track upon its flanks, and yet remaining of the same size, the same form, and in the same place, for half a day together. No matter how violent or how capricious the wind may be, the instant it approaches the spot where the chilly influence of the snow extends, the moisture it carries becomes visible, and then and there the cloud forms on the instant, apparently maintaining its form against the wind, though the careful and keen eye can see all its parts in the most rapid motion across the mountain. The outlines of such a cloud are of course not determined by the irregular impulses of the wind, but by the fixed lines of radiant heat which regulate the temperature of the atmosphere of the mountain. It is terminated, therefore, not by changing curves, but by steady right lines of more or less decision, often exactly correspondent with the outline of the mountain on which it is formed, and falling therefore into grotesque peaks and precipices. I have seen the marked and angular outline of the Grandes Jorasses, at Chamounix, mimicked in its every jag by a line of clouds above it. Another resultant phenomenon is the formation of cloud in the calm air to leeward of a steep summit ; cloud whose edges are in rapid motion, where they are affected by the current of the wind above, and stream from the peak like the smoke of a volcano, yet always vanish at a certain distance from it as steam issuing from a chimney. When wet weather of some duration is approaching, a small white spot of cloud will sometimes appear low on the hill flanks ; it will not move, but will increase gradually for some little time, then diminish, still without moving ; disappear altogether, reappear ten minutes afterwards, exactly in the same spot ; increase to a greater extent than before, again disappear, again return, and at last permanently ; other similar spots of cloud forming simultaneously, with various fluctuations, each in its own spot, and at the same level on the hill-side, until all expand, join together, and form an unbroken veil of threatening gray, which darkens gradually into storm. What in such cases takes place palpably and remarkably, is more or less a law of formation in all clouds whatsoever ; they being bounded rather by lines expressive of changes of temperature in the atmosphere, than by the impulses of the currents of wind in which those changes take place. Even when in rapid and visible motion across the sky, the variations which take place in their outlines are not so much alterations of position and arrangement of parts, as they are the alternate formation and disappearance of parts. There is, therefore, usually a parallelism and consistency in their great outlines, which give system to the smaller curves of which they are composed;

and if these great lines be taken, rejecting the minutiæ of variation, the resultant form will almost always be angular, and full of character and decision. In the flock-like fields of equal masses, each individual mass has the effect, not of an ellipse or circle, but of a rhomboid; the sky is crossed and checkered, not honeycombed; in the lower cumuli, even though the most rounded of all clouds, the groups are not like balloons or bubbles, but like towers or mountains. And the result of this arrangement in masses more or less angular, varied with, and chiefly constructed of, curves of the utmost freedom and beauty, is that appearance of exhaustless and fantastic energy which gives every cloud a marked character of its own, suggesting resemblances to the specific outlines of organic objects. I do not say that such accidental resemblances are a character to be imitated; but merely that they bear witness to the originality and vigor of separate conception in cloud forms, which give to the scenery of the sky a force and variety no less delightful than that of the changes of mountain outline in a hill district of great elevation; and that there is added to this a spirit-like feeling, a capricious, mocking imagery of passion and life, totally different from any effects of inanimate form that the earth can show.

§ 5. Their angular forms and general decision of outline.

The minor contours, out of which the larger outlines are composed, are indeed beautifully curvilinear; but they are never monotonous in their curves. First comes a concave line, then a convex one, then an angular jag, breaking off into spray, then a downright straight line, then a curve again, then a deep gap, and a place where all is lost and melted away, and so on; displaying in every inch of the form renewed and ceaseless invention, setting off grace with rigidity, and relieving flexibility with force, in a manner scarcely less admirable, and far more changeful than even in the muscular forms of the human frame. Nay, such is the exquisite composition of all this, that you may take any single fragment of any cloud in the sky, and you will find it put together as if there had been a year's thought over the plan of it, arranged with

§ 6. The composition of their minor curves.

the most studied inequality—with the most delicate symmetry—with the most elaborate contrast, a picture in itself. You may try every other piece of cloud in the heaven, and you will find them every one as perfect, and yet not one in the least like another.

§ 7. Their characters, as given by S. Rosa.

Now it may perhaps, for anything we know, or have yet proved, be highly expedient and proper, in art, that this variety, individuality, and angular character should be changed into a mass of convex curves, each precisely like its neighbor in all respects, and unbroken from beginning to end;—it may be highly original, masterly, bold, whatever you choose to call it; but it is *false*. I do not take upon me to assert that the clouds which in ancient Germany were more especially and peculiarly devoted to the business of catching princesses off desert islands, and carrying them to enchanted castles, might not have possessed something of the pillowy organization which we may suppose best adapted for functions of such delicacy and dispatch. But I do mean to say that the clouds which God sends upon his earth as the ministers of dew, and rain, and shade, and with which he adorns his heaven, setting them in its vault for the thrones of his spirits, have not in one instant or atom of their existence, one feature in common with such conceptions and creations. And there are, beyond dispute, more direct and unmitigated falsehoods told, and more laws of nature set at open defiance in *one* of the "rolling" skies of Salvator, such as that marked 159 in the Dulwich Gallery, than were ever attributed, even by the ignorant and unfeeling, to all the wildest flights of Turner put together.

§ 8. Monotony and falsehood of the clouds of the Italian School generally.

And it is not as if the error were only occasional. It is systematic and constant in all the Italian masters of the seventeenth century, and in most of the Dutch. They looked at clouds as at everything else which did not particularly help them in their great end of deception, with utter carelessness and bluntness of feeling,—saw that there were a great many rounded passages in them,—found it much easier to sweep circles than to design beauties, and sat down in their studies, contented with perpetual repetitions of the same spherical conceptions, having about the same relation to the clouds of nature, that a child's carving of a turnip has to the head of the Apollo. Look at the round things about the sun in the bricky Claude, the smallest of the three Seaports in the National Gallery. They are a great deal more like half-crowns than clouds. Take the ropy, tough-looking wreath in the Sacrifice of Isaac, and find one part of it, if you can, which is not the repetition of every other part of it, all together being as round and vapid as the brush could draw them; or take the two cauliflower-like protuberances in No. 220 of the Dulwich Gallery, and admire the studied similarity between them; you cannot tell which is which; or take the so-called Nicholas Poussin, No. 212, Dulwich Gallery, in which, from the brown trees to the right-hand side of the picture, there is not one line which is not physically impossible.

§ 9. Vast size of congregated masses of cloud.

But it is not the outline only which is thus systematically false. The drawing of the solid form is worse still, for it is to be remembered that although clouds of course arrange themselves more or less into broad masses, with a light side and dark side, both their light and shade are invariably composed of a series of divided masses, each of which has in its outline as much variety and character as the great outline of the cloud; presenting, therefore, a thousand times repeated, all that I have described as characteristic of the general form. Nor are these multitudinous divisions a truth of slight importance in the character of sky, for they are dependent on, and illustrative of, a quality which is usually in a great degree overlooked,—the enormous retiring spaces of solid clouds. Between the illumined edge of a heaped cloud, and that part of its body which turns into shadow, there will generally be a clear distance of several miles, more or less of course, according to the general size of the cloud, but in such large masses as in Poussin and others of the old masters, occupy the fourth or fifth of the visible sky; the clear illumined breadth of vapor, from the edge to the shadow, involves at least a distance of five or six miles. We are little apt, in watching the changes of a mountainous range of cloud, to reflect that the masses of vapor which compose it, are huger and higher than any mountain range of the earth; and the distances between mass and mass are not yards of air traversed in an instant by the flying form, but valleys of changing atmosphere leagues over; that the slow motion of ascending curves, which we can scarcely trace, is a boiling energy of exulting vapor rushing into the heaven a thousand feet in a minute; and that the toppling angle whose sharp edge almost escapes notice in the multitudinous forms around it, is a nodding precipice of storms, 3000 feet from base to summit. It is not until we have actually compared the forms of the sky with the hill ranges of the earth, and seen the soaring Alp overtopped and buried in one surge of the sky, that we begin to conceive or appreciate the colossal scale of the phenomena of the latter. But of this there can be no doubt in the mind of any one accustomed to trace the forms of clouds among hill ranges—as it is there a demonstrable and evident fact, that the space of vapor visibly extended over an ordinarily cloudy sky, is not less, from the point nearest to the observer to the horizon, than twenty leagues; that the size of every mass of separate form, if it be at all largely divided, is to be expressed in terms of *miles;* and that every boiling heap of illuminated mist in the nearer sky, is an enormous mountain, fifteen or twenty thousand feet in height, six or seven miles over an illuminated surface, furrowed by a thousand colossal ravines, torn by local tempests into peaks and promontories, and changing its features with the majestic velocity of the volcano.

§ 10. Demonstrable by comparison with mountain ranges.

To those who have once convinced themselves of these proportions of the heaven, it will be immediately evident, that though we might, without much violation of truth, omit the minor divisions of a cloud four yards over, it is the veriest audacity of falsehood to omit those of masses where for yards we have to read miles; first, because it is physically impossible that such a space should be without many and vast divisions; secondly, because divisions at such distances must be sharply and forc-

§ 11. And consequent divisions and varieties of feature.

ibly marked by aerial perspective, so that not *only* they must be there, but they must be visible and evident to the eye; and thirdly, because these multitudinous divisions are absolutely necessary, in order to express this space and distance, which cannot but be fully and imperfectly felt, even with every aid and evidence that art can give of it.

§ 12. Not lightly to be omitted.

Now if an artist taking for his subject a chain of vast mountains, several leagues long, were to unite all their varieties of ravine, crag, chasm, and precipice, into one solid, unbroken mass, with one light side and one dark side, looking like a white ball or parallelopiped two yards broad, the words "breadth," "boldness," or "generalization," would scarcely be received as a sufficient apology for a proceeding so glaringly false, and so painfully degrading. But when, instead of the really large and simple forms of mountains, united, as they commonly are, by some great principle of common organization, and so closely resembling each other as often to correspond in line, and join in effect; when instead of this, we have to do with spaces of cloud twice as vast, broken up into a multiplicity of forms necessary to, and characteristic of, their very nature—those forms subject to a thousand local changes, having no association with each other, and rendered visible in a thousand places by their own transparency or cavities, where the mountain forms would be lost in shade,—that this far greater space, and this far more complicated arrangement, should be all summed up into one round mass, with one swell of white, and one flat side of unbroken gray, is considered an evidence of the sublimest powers in the artist of generalization and breadth. Now it may be broad, it may be grand, it may be beautiful, artistical, and in every way desirable. I don't say it is not—I merely say it is a concentration of every kind of falsehood: it is depriving heaven of its space, clouds of their buoyancy, winds of their motion, and distance of its blue.

This is done, more or less, by all the old masters, without an exception.* Their idea of clouds was altogether similar;

---

* Here I include even the great ones—even Titian and Veronese,—excepting only Tintoret and the religious schools.

more or less perfectly carried out, according to their power of hand and accuracy of eye, but universally the same in conception. It was the idea of a comparatively small, round, puffed-up white body, irregularly associated with other round and puffed-up white bodies, each with a white light side, and a gray dark side, and a soft reflected light, floating a great way below a blue dome. Such is the idea of a cloud formed by most people ; it is the first, general, uncultivated notion of what we see every day. People think of the clouds as about as large as they look—forty yards over, perhaps ; they see generally that they are solid bodies subject to the same laws as other solid bodies, roundish, whitish, and apparently suspended a great way under a high blue concavity. So that these ideas be tolerably given with smooth paint, they are content, and call it nature. How different it is from anything that nature ever did, or ever will do, I have endeavored to show ; but I cannot, and do not, expect the contrast to be fully felt, unless the reader will actually go out on days when, either before or after rain, the clouds arrange themselves into vigorous masses, and after arriving at something like a conception of their distance and size, from the mode in which they retire over the horizon, will for himself trace and watch their varieties of form and outline, as mass rises over mass in their illuminated bodies. Let him climb from step to step over their craggy and broken slopes, let him plunge into the long vistas of immeasurable perspective, that guide back to the blue sky ; and when he finds his imagination lost in their immensity, and his senses confused with their multitude, let him go to Claude, to Salvator, or to Poussin, and ask them for a like space, or like infinity.

§ 13. Imperfect conceptions of this size and extent in ancient landscape.

But perhaps the most grievous fault of all, in the clouds of these painters, is the utter want of transparency. Not in her most ponderous and lightless masses will nature ever leave us without some evidence of transmitted sunshine ; and she perpetually gives us passages in which the vapor becomes visible only by the sunshine which it arrests and holds within itself,

§ 14. Total want of transparency and evanescence in the clouds of ancient landscape.

not caught on its surface, but entangled in its mass—floating fleeces, precious with the gold of heaven ; and this translucency is especially indicated on the dark sides even of her heaviest wreaths, which possess opalescent and delicate hues of partial illumination, far more dependent upon the beams which pass through them than on those which are reflected upon them. Nothing, on the contrary, can be more painfully and ponderously opaque than the clouds of the old masters universally. However far removed in aerial distance, and however brilliant in light, they never appear filmy or evanescent, and their light is always *on* them, not *in* them. And this effect is much increased by the positive and persevering determination on the part of their outlines not to be broken in upon, nor interfered with in the slightest degree, by any presumptuous blue, or impertinent winds. There is no inequality, no variation, no losing or disguising of line, no melting into nothingness, nor shattering into spray ; edge succeeds edge with imperturbable equanimity and nothing short of the most decided interference on the part of tree-tops, or the edge of the picture, prevents us from being able to follow them all the way round, like the coast of an island.

And be it remembered that all these faults and deficiencies are to be found in their drawing merely of the separate masses of the solid cumulus, the easiest drawn of all clouds.

§ 15. Farther proof of their deficiency in space.

But nature scarcely ever confines herself to such masses ; they form but the thousandth part of her variety of effect. She builds up a pyramid of their boiling volumes, bars this across like a mountain with the gray cirrus, envelops it in black, ragged, drifting vapor, covers the open part of the sky with mottled horizontal fields, breaks through these with sudden and long sunbeams, tears up their edges with local winds, scatters over the gaps of blue the infinity of multitude of the high cirri, and melts even the unoccupied azure into palpitating shades. And all this is done over and over again in every quarter of a mile. Where Poussin or Claude have three similar masses, nature has fifty pictures, made up each of millions of minor thoughts

—fifty aisles penetrating through angelic chapels to the Shechinah of the blue—fifty hollow ways among bewildered hills—each with their own nodding rocks, and cloven precipices, and radiant summits, and robing vapors, but all unlike each other, except in beauty, all bearing witness to the unwearied, exhaustless operation of the Infinite Mind. Now, in cases like these especially, as we observed before of general nature, though it is altogether hopeless to follow out in the space of any one picture this incalculable and inconceivable glory, yet the painter can at least see that the space he has at his command, narrow and confined as it is, is made complete use of, and that no part of it shall be without entertainment and food for thought. If he could subdivide it by millionths of inches, he could not reach the multitudinous majesty of nature ; but it is at least incumbent upon him to make the most of what he has, and not, by exaggerating the proportions, banishing the variety and repeating the forms of his clouds, to set at defiance the eternal principles of the heavens—fitfulness and infinity. And now let us, keeping in memory what we have seen of Poussin and Salvator, take up one of Turner's skies, and see whether *he* is as narrow in his conception, or as niggardly in his space.

§ 16. Instance of perfect truth in the sky of Turner's Babylon.

It does not matter which we take, his sublime Babylon* is a fair example for our present purpose. Ten miles away, down the Euphrates, where it gleams last along the plain, he gives us a drift of dark elongated vapor, melting beneath into a dim haze which embraces the hills on the horizon. It is exhausted with its own motion, and broken up by the wind in its own body into numberless groups of billowy and tossing fragments, which, beaten by the weight of storm down to the earth, are just lifting themselves again on wearied wings, and perishing in the effort. Above these, and far beyond them, the eye goes back to a broad sea of white, illuminated mist, or rather cloud melted into rain, and absorbed again before that rain has fallen, but penetrated throughout, whether it be vapor or whether it be dew, with soft sunshine, turning it as white as snow. Gradually as it rises, the rainy fusion ceases, you cannot tell where the film of blue on the left begins—but it is deepening, deepening still,—and the cloud, with its edge first invisible, then all but imaginary, then just felt when the eye is *not* fixed on it, and lost when it is, at last rises, keen from excessive distance, but soft and mantling in its body, as a swan's bosom fretted by faint wind, heaving fitfully against the delicate deep blue, with white waves, whose forms are traced by the pale lines of opalescent shadow, shade only because the light is within it, and not upon it, and which break with their own swiftness into a driven line of level spray, winnowed into threads by the wind, and flung before the following vapor like those swift shafts of arrowy water which a great cataract shoots into the air beside it, trying to find the earth. Beyond these, again, rises a colossal mountain of gray cumulus, through whose shadowed sides the sunbeams penetrate in dim, sloping, rain-like shafts ; and over which they fall in a broad burst of streaming light, sinking to the earth, and showing through their own visible radiance the three successive ranges of hills which connect its desolate plain with space. Above, the edgy summit of the cumulus, broken into fragments, recedes into the sky, which is peopled in its serenity with quiet multitudes of the white, soft, silent cirrus : and under these again, drift near the zenith, disturbed and impatient shadows of a darker spirit, seeking rest and finding none.

---

* Engraved in Findel's Bible Illustrations.

§ 17. And in his Pools of Solomon.

Now this is nature ! It is the exhaustless living energy with which the universe is filled ; and what will you set beside it of the works of other men ? Show me a single picture, in the whole compass of ancient art, in which I can pass from cloud to cloud, from region to region, from first to second and third heaven, as I can here, and you may talk of Turner's want of truth. Turn to the Pools of Solomon, and walk through the passages of mist as they melt on the one hand into those stormy fragments of fiery cloud, or, on the other, into the cold solitary shadows that compass the sweeping hill, and when you find an inch without air and transparency, and a hairbreadth without changefulness and thought; and when you can count the torn waves of tossing radiance that gush from the sun, as you can count the fixed, white, insipidities of Claude; or when you can measure the modulation and the depth of that hollow mist, as you can the flourishes of the brush upon the canvas of Salvator, talk of Turner's want of truth!

But let us take up simpler and less elaborate works, for there is too much in these to admit of being analyzed.

§ 18. Truths of outline and character in his Como.

In the vignette of the Lake of Como, in Rogers's Italy, the space is so small that the details have been partially lost by the engraver; but enough remain to illustrate the great principles of cloud from which we have endeavored to explain. Observe first the general angular outline of the volumes on the left of the sun. If you mark the points where the direction of their outline changes, and connect those points by right lines, the cloud will touch, but will not cut, those lines throughout. Yet its contour is as graceful as it is full of character—toppling, ready to change—fragile as enormous—evanescent as colossal. Observe how, where it crosses the line of the sun, it becomes luminous, illustrating what has been observed of the visibility of mist in sunlight. Observe, above all, the multiplicity of its solid form, the depth of its shadows in perpetual transition; it is not round and swelled, half light and half dark, but full of breaking irregular shadow and transparency—variable as the wind, and melting imperceptibly above into the haziness of the sun-lighted atmosphere, contrasted in all its vast forms with the delicacy and the multitude of the brightly touched cirri. Nothing can surpass the truth of this; the cloud is as gigantic in its simplicity as the Alp which it opposes; but how various, how transparent, how infinite in its organization!

§ 19. Association of the cirrostratus with the cumulus.

I would draw especial attention, both here and in all other works of Turner, to the beautiful use of the low horizontal bars or fields of cloud, (cirrostratus,) which associate themselves so frequently—more especially before storms—with the true cumulus, floating on its flanks, or capping it, as if it were a mountain, and seldom mingling with its substance, unless in the very formation of rain. They supply us with one of those beautiful instances of natural composition, by which the artist is superseded and excelled—for, by the occurrence of these horizontal flakes, the rolling form of the cumulus is both opposed in its principal lines, and gifted with an apparent solidity and vastness, which no other expedient could have exhibited, and which far exceed in awfulness the impression of the noblest mountains of the earth. I have seen in the evening light of Italy, the Alps themselves out-towered by ranges of these mighty clouds, alternately white in the starlight, and inhabited by fire.

§ 20. The deep-based knowledge of the Alps in Turner's Lake of Geneva.

Turn back to the first vignette in the Italy. The angular outlines and variety of modulation in the clouds above the sail, and the delicate atmosphere of morning into which they are dissolved about the breathing hills, require no comment; but one part of this vignette demands especial notice; it is the repetition of the outline of the snowy mountain by the light cloud above it. The cause of this I have already explained (vide page 302,) and its occurrence here is especially valuable as bearing witness to the thorough and scientific knowledge thrown by Turner into his slightest works. The thing cannot be seen once in six months; it would not have been noticed, much less introduced by an ordinary artist, and to the public it is a dead letter, or an offence. Ninety-nine persons in a hundred would not have observed this pale wreath of parallel cloud above the hill, and the hundredth in all probability says it is unnatural. It requires the most intimate and accurate knowledge of the Alps before such a piece of refined truth can be understood.

§ 21. Further principles of cloud form exemplified in his Amalfi.

At the 216th page we have another and a new case, in which clouds in perfect repose, unaffected by wind, or any influence but that of their own elastic force, boil, rise, and melt in the heaven with more approach to globular form than under any other circumstances is possible. I name this vignette, not only because it is most remarkable for the buoyancy and elasticity of inward energy, indicated through the most ponderous forms, and affords us a beautiful instance of the junction of the cirrostratus with the cumulus, of which we have just been speaking (§ 19,) but because it is a characteristic example of Turner's use of one of the facts of nature not hitherto noticed, that the edge of a partially transparent body is often darker than its central surface, because at the edge the light penetrates and passes through, which from the centre is reflected to the eye. The sharp, cutting edge of a wave, if not broken into foam, frequently appears for an instant almost black; and the outlines of these massy clouds, where their projecting forms rise in relief against the light of their bodies, are almost always marked clearly and firmly by very dark edges. Hence we have frequently, if not constantly, multitudinous forms indicated only by outline, giving character and solidity to the great masses of light, without taking away from their breadth. And Turner avails himself of these boldly and constantly,—outlining forms with the brush of which no other indication is given. All the grace and solidity of the white cloud on the right-hand side of the vignette before us, depends upon such outlines.

§ 22. Reasons for insisting on the *infinity* of Turner's works. Infinity is almost an unerring test of *all* truth.

As I before observed of mere execution, that one of the best tests of its excellence was the expression of *infinity;* so it may be noticed with respect to the painting of details generally, that more difference lies between one artist and another, in the attainment of this quality, than in any other of the efforts of art; and that if we wish, without reference to beauty of composition, or any other interfering circumstances, to form a judgment of the truth of painting, perhaps the very first thing we should look for, whether in one thing or another—foliage, or clouds, or waves—should be the expression of *infinity* always and everywhere, in all parts and division of parts. For we may be quite sure that what is not infinite, cannot be true; it does not, indeed, follow that what is infinite, always is true, but it cannot be altogether false, for this simple reason; that it is impossible for mortal mind to compose an infinity of any kind for itself, or to form an idea of perpetual variation, and to avoid all repetition, merely by its own combining resources. The moment that we trust to ourselves, we repeat ourselves, and therefore the moment we see in a work of any kind whatsoever, the expression of infinity, we may be certain that the workman has gone to nature for it ; while, on the other hand, the moment we see repetition, or want of infinity, we may be certain that the workman has *not* gone to nature for it.

§ 23. Instances of the total want of it in the works of Salvator.

For instance, in the picture of Salvator before noticed, No. 220 in the Dulwich Gallery, as we see at once that the two masses of cloud absolutely repeat each other in every one of their forms, and that each is composed of about twelve white sweeps of the brush, all forming the same curve, and all of the same length ; and as we can count these, and measure their common diameter, and by stating the same to anybody else, convey to him a full and perfect idea and knowledge of that sky in all its parts and proportions,—as we can do this, we may be absolutely certain, without reference to the real sky, or to any other part of nature, without even knowing what the white things were intended for, we may be certain that they cannot possibly resemble *anything ;* that whatever they were meant for, they can be nothing but a violent contradiction of all nature's principles and forms. When, on the other hand, we take up such a sky as that of Turner's Rouen, seen from St. Catherine's Hill, in the Rivers of France, and find, in the first place, that he has given us a distance over the hills in the horizon, into which, when we are tired of penetrating, we must turn and come back again, there being not the remotest chance of getting to the end of it ; and when we see that from this measureless distance up to the zenith, the whole sky is one ocean of alternate waves of cloud and light, so blended together that the eye cannot rest on any one without being guided to the next, and so to a hundred more, till it is lost over and over again in every wreath—that if it divides the sky into quarters of inches, and tries to count or comprehend the component parts of any single

§ 24. And of the universal presence of it in those of Turner. The conclusions which may be arrived at from it.

one of those divisions, it is still as utterly defied and defeated by the part as by the whole—that there is not one line out of the millions there which repeats another, not one which is unconnected with another, not one which does not in itself convey histories of distance and space, and suggest new and changeful form; then we may be all but certain, though these forms are too mysterious and too delicate for us to analyze—though all is so crowded and so connected that it is impossible to test any single part by particular laws—yet without any such tests, we may be sure that this infinity can only be based on truth—that it *must* be nature, because man could not have originated it, and that every form must be faithful, because none is like another. And therefore it is that I insist so constantly on this great quality of landscape painting, as it appears in Turner; because it is not merely a constant and most important truth in itself, but it almost amounts to a demonstration of every other truth. And it will be found a far rarer attainment in the works of other men than is commonly supposed, and the sign, wherever it is really found, of the very highest art. For we are apt to forget that the greatest *number* is no nearer infinity than the least, if it be definite number; and the vastest bulk is no nearer infinity than the most minute, if it be definite bulk; so that a man may multiply his objects forever and ever, and be no nearer infinity than he had reached with one, if he do not vary them and confuse them; and a man may reach infinity in every touch and line, and part, and unit, if in these he be truthfully various and obscure. And we shall find, the more we examine the works of the old masters, that always, and in all parts, they are totally wanting in every feeling of infinity, and therefore in *all* truth: and even in the works of the moderns, though the aim is far more just, we shall frequently perceive an erroneous choice of means, and a substitution of mere number or bulk for real infinity.

§ 25. The multiplication of objects, or increase of their size, will not give the impression of infinity, but is the resource of novices.

And therefore, in concluding our notice of the central cloud region, I should wish to dwell particularly on those skies of Turner's, in which we have the whole space of the heaven covered with the delicate dim flakes of gathering vapor, which are the intermediate link between the central region and that of the rain-cloud, and which assemble and grow out of the air; shutting up the heaven with a gray interwoven veil, before the approach of storm, faint, but universal, letting the light of the upper sky pass pallidly through their body, but never rending a passage for the ray. We have the first approach and gathering of this kind of sky most gloriously given in the vignette at page 115 of Roger's Italy, which is one of the most perfect pieces of feeling (if I may transgress my usual rules for an instant) extant in art, owing to the extreme grandeur and stern simplicity of the strange and ominous forms of level cloud behind the building. In that at page 223, there are passages of the same kind, of exceeding perfection. The sky through which the dawn is breaking in the Voyage of Columbus, and that with the Moonlight under the Rialto, in Roger's Poems, the skies of the Bethlehem, and the Pyramids in Finden's Bible series, and among the Academy pictures, that of the Hero and Leander, and Flight into Egypt, are characteristic and noble examples, as far as any individual works can be characteristic of the universality of this mighty mind. I ought not to forget the magnificent solemnity and fulness of the wreaths of gathering darkness in the Folkstone.

§ 26. Farther instances of infinity in the gray skies of Turner.

We must not pass from the consideration of the central cloud region without noticing the general high quality of the cloud-drawing of Stanfield. He is limited in his range, and is apt in extensive compositions to repeat himself, neither is he ever very refined; but his cloud-form is firmly and fearlessly chiselled, with perfect knowledge, though usually with some want of feeling. As far as it goes, it is very grand and very tasteful, beautifully developed in the space of its solid parts and full of action. Next to Turner, he is incomparably the noblest master of cloud-form of all our artists; in fact, he is the only one among them who really can *draw* a cloud. For

§ 27. The excellence of the cloud-drawing of Stanfield.

it is a very different thing to rub out an irregular white space neatly with the handkerchief, or to leave a bright little bit of paper in the middle of a wash, and to give the real anatomy of cloud-form with perfect articulation of chiaroscuro. We have multitudes of painters who can throw a light bit of straggling vapor across their sky, or leave in it delicate and tender passages of breaking light; but this is a very different thing from taking up each of those bits or passages, and giving it structure, and parts, and solidity. The eye is satisfied with exceedingly little, as an indication of cloud, and a few clever sweeps of the brush on wet paper may give all that it requires; but this is not *drawing* clouds, nor will it ever appeal fully and deeply to the mind, except when it occurs only as a part of a higher system. And there is not one of our modern artists, except Stanfield, who can do much more than this. As soon as they attempt to lay detail upon their clouds, they appear to get bewildered, forget that they are dealing with forms regulated by precisely the same simple laws of light and shade as more substantial matter, overcharge their color, confuse their shadows and dark sides, and end in mere ragged confusion. I believe the evil arises from their never attempting to render clouds except with the brush; other objects, at some period of study, they take up with the chalk or lead, and so learn something of their form; but they appear to consider clouds as altogether dependent on cobalt and camel's hair, and so never understand anything of their real anatomy. But whatever the cause, I cannot point to any central clouds of the moderns, except those of Turner and Stanfield, as really showing much knowledge of, or feeling for, nature, though *all* are superior to the conventional and narrow conceptions of the ancients. We are all right as far as we go, our work may be incomplete, but it is not false; and it is far better, far less injurious to the mind, that we should be little attracted to the sky, and taught to be satisfied with a light suggestion of truthful form, than that we be drawn to it by violently pronounced outline and intense

§ 28. The average standing of the English school.

color, to find in its finished falsehood everything to displease or to mislead—to hurt our feelings, if we have foundation for them, and corrupt them, if we have none.

CHAPTER IV.

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS: THIRDLY, OF THE REGION OF THE RAIN-CLOUD.

§ 1. The apparent difference in character between the lower and central clouds is dependent chiefly on proximity.

The clouds which I wish to consider as characteristic of the lower, or rainy region, differ not so much in their real nature from those of the central and uppermost regions, as in appearance, owing to their greater nearness. For the central clouds, and perhaps even the high cirri, deposit moisture, if not distinctly rain, as is sufficiently proved by the existence of snow on the highest peaks of the Himaleh; and when, on any such mountains, we are brought into close contact with the central clouds,* we find them little differing from the ordinary rain-cloud of the plains, except by being slightly less dense and dark. But the apparent differences, dependent on proximity, are most marked and important.

§ 2. Their marked difference in color.

In the first place, the clouds of the central region have, as has been before observed, pure and aerial grays for their dark sides, owing to the necessary distance from the observer; and as this distance permits a multitude of local phenomena capable of influencing color, such as accidental sunbeams, refractions, transparencies, or local mists and showers, to be collected into a space comparatively small, the colors of these clouds are always changeful and palpitating; and whatever degree of gray or of gloom may be mixed with them is invariably pure and aerial. But the nearness of the rain-cloud rendering it impossible for a number of phenomena to be at once visible, makes its hue of gray monotonous, and (by losing the blue of distance) warm and brown compared to that of the upper clouds. This is especially remarkable on any part of it which may happen to be illumined, which is of a brown, bricky, ochreous tone, never bright, always coming in dark outline on the lights of the central clouds. But it is seldom that this takes place, and when it does, never over large spaces, little being usually seen of the rain-cloud but its under and dark side. This, when the cloud above is dense, becomes of an inky and cold gray, and sulphureous and lurid if there be thunder in the air.

---

* I am unable to say to what height the real rain-cloud may extend; perhaps there are no mountains which rise altogether above storm. I have never been in a violent storm at a greater height than between 8000 and 9000 feet above the level of the sea. There the rain-cloud is exceedingly light, compared to the ponderous darkness of the lower air.

§ 3. And in definiteness of form.

With these striking differences in color, it presents no fewer nor less important in form, chiefly from losing almost all definiteness of character and outline. It is sometimes nothing more than a thin mist, whose outline cannot be traced, rendering the landscape locally indistinct or dark ; if its outline be visible, it is ragged and torn ; rather a spray of cloud, taken off its edge and sifted by the wind, than an edge of the cloud itself. In fact, it rather partakes of the nature, and assumes the appearance, of real water in the state of spray, than of elastic vapor. This appearance is enhanced by the usual presence of formed rain, carried along with it in a columnar form, ordinarily, of course, reaching the ground like a veil, but very often suspended with the cloud, and hanging from it like a jagged fringe, or over it in light, rain being always lighter than the cloud it falls from. These columns, or fringes, of rain are often waved and bent by the wind, or twisted, sometimes even swept upwards from the cloud. The velocity of these vapors, though not necessarily in reality greater than that of the central clouds, appears greater, owing to their proximity, and, of course, also to the usual presence of a more violent wind. They are also apparently much more in the power of the wind, having less elastic force in themselves ; but they are precisely subject to the same great laws of form which regulate the upper clouds. They are not solid bodies borne about with the wind, but they carry the wind with them, and cause it. Every one knows, who has ever been out in a storm, that the time when it rains heaviest is precisely the time when he cannot hold up his umbrella; that the wind is carried with the cloud, and lulls when it has passed. Every one who has ever seen rain in a hill country, knows that a rain-cloud, like any other, may have all its parts in rapid motion, and yet, as a whole, remain in one spot. I remember once, when in crossing the Tête Noire, I had turned up the valley towards Trient, I noticed a rain-cloud forming on the Glacier de Trient. With a west wind, it proceeded towards the Col de Balme, being followed by a prolonged wreath of vapor, always forming exactly at the same spot over the glacier. This long, serpent-like line of cloud went on at a great rate till it reached the valley leading down from the Col de Balme, under the slate rocks of the Croix de Fer. There it turned sharp round, and came down this valley, at right angles to its former progress, and finally directly contrary to it, till it came down within five hundred feet of the village, where it disappeared; the line behind always advancing, and always disappearing, at the same spot. This continued for half an hour, the long line describing the curve of a horseshoe; always coming into existence, and always vanishing at exactly the same places; traversing the space between with enormous swiftness. This cloud, ten miles off, would have looked like a perfectly motionless wreath, in the form of a horseshoe, hanging over the hills.

§ 4. They are subject to precisely the same great laws.

To the region of the rain-cloud belong also all those phenomena of drifted smoke, heat-haze, local mists in the morning or evening; in valleys, or over water, mirage, white steaming vapor rising in evaporation from moist and open surfaces, and everything which visibly affects the condition of the atmosphere without actually assuming the form of cloud. These phenomena are as perpetual in all countries as they are beautiful, and afford

§ 5. Value, to the painter, of the rain-cloud.

by far the most effective and valuable means which the painter possesses, for modification of the forms of fixed objects. The upper clouds are distinct and comparatively opaque, they do not modify, but conceal; but through the rain-cloud, and its accessory phenomena, all that is beautiful may be made manifest, and all that is hurtful concealed; what is paltry may be made to look vast, and what is ponderous, aerial; mystery may be obtained without obscurity, and decoration without disguise. And, accordingly, nature herself uses it constantly, as one of her chief means of most perfect effect; not in one country, nor another, but everywhere —everywhere, at least, where there is anything worth calling landscape. I cannot answer for the desert of the Sahara, but I know that there can be no greater mistake, than supposing that delicate and variable effects of mist and rain-cloud are peculiar to northern climates. I have never seen in any place or country effects of mist more perfect than in the Campagna of Rome, and among the hills of Sorrento. It is therefore matter of no little marvel to me, and I conceive that it can scarcely be otherwise to any reflecting person, that throughout the whole range of ancient landscape art, there occurs no instance of the painting of a real rain-cloud, still less of any of the more delicate phenomena characteristic of the region. "Storms" indeed, as the innocent public persist in calling such abuses of nature and abortions of art as the two windy Gaspars in our National Gallery, are common enough; massive concretions of ink and indigo, wrung and twisted very hard, apparently in a vain effort to get some moisture out of them; bearing up courageously and successfully against a wind, whose effects on the trees in the foreground can be accounted for only on the supposition that they are all of the India-rubber species. Enough of this in all conscience we have, and to spare; but for the legitimate rain-cloud, with its ragged and spray-like edge, its veilly transparency, and its columnar burden of blessing, neither it, nor anything like it, or approaching it, occurs in any painting of the old masters that I have ever

§ 6. The old masters have not left a single instance of the painting of the rain-cloud, and very few efforts at it. Gaspar Poussin's storms.

seen; and I have seen enough to warrant my affirming that if it occur anywhere, it must be through accident rather than intention. Nor is there stronger evidence of any perception, on the part of these much respected artists, that there were such things in the world as mists or vapors. If a cloud under their direction ever touches a mountain, it does it effectually and as if it meant to do it. There is no mystifying the matter; here is a cloud, and there is a hill; if it is to come on at all, it comes on to some purpose, and there is no hope of its ever going off again. We have, therefore, little to say of the efforts of the old masters, in any scenes which might naturally have been connected with the clouds of the lowest region, except that the faults of form specified in considering the central clouds, are, by way of being energetic or sublime, more glaringly and audaciously committed in their "storms;" and that what is a wrong form among clouds possessing form, is there given with increased generosity of fiction to clouds which have no form at all.

§ 7. The great power of the moderns in this respect.

Supposing that we had nothing to show in modern art, of the region of the rain-cloud, but the dash of Cox, the blot of de Wint, or even the ordinary stormy skies of the body of our inferior water-color painters, we might yet laugh all efforts of the old masters to utter scorn. But one among our water-color artists, deserves especial notice—before we ascend the steps of the solitary throne—as having done in his peculiar walk, what for faithful and pure truth, truth indeed of a limited range and unstudied application, but yet most faithful and most pure, will remain unsurpassed if not unrivalled,—Copley Fielding. We are well aware how much of what he has done depends in a great degree upon particular tricks of execution, or on a labor somewhat too mechanical to be meritorious; that it is rather the *texture* than the *plan* of his sky which is to be admired, and that the greater part of what is pleasurable in it will fall rather under the head of dexterous imitation than of definite thought. But whatever detractions from his merit we may be compelled to make on these grounds, in considering art as the embodying of beauty, or

§ 8. Works of Copley Fielding.

the channel of mind, it is impossible, when we are speaking of truth only, to pass by his down scenes and moorland showers, of some years ago, in which he produced some of the most perfect and faultless passages of mist and rain-cloud

§ 9. His peculiar truth.

which art has ever seen. Wet, transparent, formless, full of motion, felt rather by their shadows on the hills than by their presence in the sky, becoming dark only through increased depth of space, most translucent where most sombre, and light only through increased buoyancy of motion, letting the blue through their interstices, and the sunlight through their chasms, with the irregular playfulness and traceless gradation of nature herself, his skies will remain, as long as their colors stand, among the most simple, unadulterated, and complete transcripts of a particular nature which art can point to. Had he painted five instead of five hundred such, and gone on to other sources of beauty, he might, there can be little doubt, have been one of our greatest artists. But it often grieves

§ 10. His weakness and its probable cause.

us to see how his power is limited to a particular moment, to that easiest moment for imitation, when knowledge of form may be superseded by management of the brush, and the judgment of the colorist by the manufacture of a color; the moment when all form is melted down and drifted away in the descending veil of rain, and when the variable and fitful colors of the heaven are lost in the monotonous gray of its storm tones.* We can only account for this by supposing that there is something radically wrong in his method of study; for a man of his evident depth of feeling and pure love of truth ought not to be, cannot be, except from some strange error in his mode of out-of-door practice, thus limited in his range, and liable to decline of power. We have little doubt that almost all such failures arise from the artist's neglecting the use of the chalk, and supposing that either the power of drawing forms, or the sense of their beauty, can be maintained unweakened or unblunted, without constant and laborious studies in simple light and shade, of form only. The brush is at once the artist's greatest aid and enemy ; it enables him to make his power available, but at the same time, it undermines his power, and unless it be constantly rejected for the pencil, never can be rightly used. But whatever the obstacle be, we do not doubt that it is one which, once seen, may be overcome or removed ; and we are in the constant hope of seeing this finely-minded artist shake off his lethargy, break the shackles of habit, seek in extended and right study the sources of real power, and become, what we have full faith in his capability of being, one of the leading artists of his time.

---

* I ought here, however, to have noted another effect of the rain-cloud, which, so far as I know, has been rendered only by Copley Fielding It is seen chiefly in clouds gathering for rain, when the sky is entirely covered with a gray veil rippled or waved with pendent swells of soft texture, but excessively hard and liny in their edges. I am not sure that this is an agreeable or impressive form of the rain-cloud, but it is a frequent one, and it is often most faithfully given by Fielding; only in some cases the edges becoming a little doubled and harsh have given a look of failure or misadventure to some even of the best studied passages; and something of the same hardness of line is occasionally visible in his drawing of clouds by whose nature it is not warranted.

§ 11. Impossibility of reasoning on the rain-clouds of Turner from engravings.

In passing to the works of our greatest modern master, it must be premised that the qualities which constitute a most essential part of the truth of the rain-cloud, are in no degree to be rendered by engraving. Its indefiniteness of torn and transparent form is far beyond the power of even our best engravers : I do not say beyond their *possible* power, if they would make themselves artists as well as workmen, but far beyond the power they actually possess ; while the depth and delicacy of the grays which Turner employs or produces, as well as the refinement of his execution, are, in the nature of things, utterly beyond all imitation by the opaque and lifeless darkness of the steel. What we say of his works, therefore, must be understood as referring only to the original drawings ; though we may name one or two instances in which the engraver has, to a certain degree, succeeded in distantly following the intention of the master.

Jumieges, in the Rivers of France, ought perhaps, after

§ 12. His rendering of Fielding's particular moment in the Jumieges.

§ 13. Illustration of the nature of clouds in the opposed forms of smoke and steam.

what we have said of Fielding, to be our first object of attention, because it is a rendering by Turner of Fielding's particular moment, and the only one existing, for Turner never repeats himself. One picture is allotted to one truth ; the statement is perfectly and gloriously made, and he passes on to speak of a fresh portion of God's revelation.* The haze of sunlit rain of this most magnificent picture, the gradual retirement of the dark wood into its depth, and the sparkling and evanescent light which sends its variable flashes on the abbey, figures, foliage, and foam, require no comment—they speak home at once. But there is added to this noble composition an incident which may serve us at once for a farther illustration of the nature and forms of cloud, and for a final proof how deeply and philosophically Turner has studied them.

We have on the right of the picture, the steam and the smoke of a passing steamboat. Now steam is nothing but an artificial cloud in the process of dissipation ; it is as much a cloud as those of the sky itself, that is, a quantity of moisture rendered visible in the air by imperfect solution. Accordingly, observe how exquisitely irregular and broken are its forms, how sharp and spray-like ; but with all the facts observed which were pointed out in Chap. II. of this Section, the convex side to the wind, the sharp edge on that side, the other soft and lost. Smoke, on the contrary, is an actual substance existing independently in the air, a solid opaque body, subject to no absorption nor dissipation but that of tenuity. Observe its volumes ; there is no breaking up nor disappearing here ; the wind carries its elastic globes before it, but does not dissolve nor break them.† Equally convex and void of angles on all sides, they are the exact representatives of the clouds of the old masters, and serve at once to show the ignorance and falsehood of these latter, and the accuracy of study which has guided Turner to the truth.

---

* Compare Sect. I. Chap. IV. § 5.

† It does not do so until the volumes lose their density by inequality of motion. and by the expansion of the warm air which conveys them. They are then, of course, broken into forms resembling those of clouds.

From this picture we should pass to the Llanthony,* which is the rendering of the moment immediately following that given in the Jumieges. The shower is here half exhausted, half passed by, the last drops are rattling faintly through the glimmering hazel boughs, the white torrent, swelled by the sudden storm, flings up its hasty jets of springing spray to meet the returning light; and these, as if the heaven regretted what it had given, and were taking it back, pass, as they leap, into vapor, and fall not again, but vanish in the shafts of the sunlight † —hurrying, fitful, wind-woven sunlight—which glides through the thick leaves, and paces along the pale rocks like rain; half conquering, half quenched by the very mists which it summons itself from the lighted pastures as it passes, and gathers out of the drooping herbage and from the streaming crags; sending them with messages of peace to the far summits of the yet unveiled mountains whose silence is still broken by the sound of the rushing rain.

§ 14. Moment of retiring rain in the Llanthony.

With this noble work we should compare one of which we can better judge by the engraving—the Loch Coriskin, in the illustrations to Scott, because it introduces us to another and a most remarkable instance of the artist's vast and varied knowledge. When rain falls on a mountain composed chiefly of

§ 15. And of commencing. chosen with peculiar meaning for Loch Coriskin.

---

* No conception can be formed of this picture from the engraving. It is perhaps the most marvellous piece of execution and of gray color existing, except perhaps the drawing presently to be noticed, Land's End. Nothing else can be set beside it, even of Turner's own works—much less of any other man's.

† I know no effect more strikingly characteristic of the departure of a storm than the *smoking* of the mountain torrents. The exhausted air is so thirsty of moisture, that every jet of spray is seized upon by it, and converted into vapor as it springs; and this vapor rises so densely from the surface of the stream as to give it the exact appearance of boiling water. I have seen the whole course of the Arve at Chamonix one line of dense cloud, dissipating as soon as it had risen ten or twelve feet from the surface, but entirely concealing the water from an observer placed above it.

barren rocks, their surfaces, being violently heated by the sun, whose most intense warmth always precedes rain, occasion sudden and violent evaporation, actually converting the first shower into steam. Consequently, upon all such hills, on the commencement of rain, white volumes of vapor are instantaneously and universally formed, which rise, are absorbed by the atmosphere, and again descend in rain, to rise in fresh volumes until the surfaces of the hills are cooled. Where there is grass or vegetation, this effect is diminished; where there is foliage it scarcely takes place at all. Now this effect has evidently been especially chosen by Turner for Loch Coriskin, not only because it enabled him to relieve its jagged forms with veiling vapor, but to tell the tale which no pencilling could, the story of its utter absolute barrenness of unlichened, dead, desolated rock:—

> "The wildest glen, but this, can show
> Some touch of nature's genial glow,
> On high Benmore green mosses grow,
> And heath-bells bud in deep Glencoe.
> And copse on Cruchan Ben;
> But here, above, around, below,
> On mountain, or in glen,
> Nor tree, nor plant, nor shrub, nor flower,
> Nor aught of vegetative power,
> The wearied eye may ken;
> But all its rocks at random thrown,
> Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone."
> LORD OF THE ISLES, Canto III.

Here, again, we see the absolute necessity of scientific and entire acquaintance with nature, before this great artist can be understood. That which, to the ignorant, is little more than an unnatural and meaningless confusion of steam-like vapor, is to the experienced such a full and perfect expression of the character of the spot, as no means of art could have otherwise given.

§ 16. The drawing of transparent vapor in the Land's End.

In the Long Ships Lighthouse, Land's End, we have clouds without rain—at twilight—enveloping the cliffs of the coast, but concealing nothing, every outline being visible through their gloom;

and not only the outline—for it is easy to do this—but the *surface*. The bank of rocky coast approaches the spectator inch by inch, felt clearer and clearer as it withdraws from the garment of cloud—not by edges more and more defined, but by a surface more and more unveiled. We have thus the painting, not of a mere transparent veil, but of a solid body of cloud, every inch of whose increasing distance is marked and felt. But the great wonder of the picture is the intensity of gloom which is attained in pure warm gray, without either blackness or blueness. It is a gloom, dependent rather on the enormous space and depth indicated, than on actual pitch of color, distant by real drawing, without a grain of blue, dark by real substance, without a stroke of blackness ; and with all this, it is not formless, but full of indications of character, wild, irregular, shattered, and indefinite—full of the energy of storm, fiery in haste, and yet flinging back out of its motion the fitful swirls of bounding drift, of tortured vapor tossed up like men's hands, as in defiance of the tempest, the jets of resulting whirlwind, hurled back from the rocks into the face of the coming darkness ; which, beyond all other characters, mark the raised passion of the elements. It is this untraceable, unconnected, yet perpetual form—this fulness of character absorbed in the universal energy—which distinguish nature and Turner from all their imitators. To roll a volume of smoke before the wind, to indicate motion or violence by monotonous similarity of line and direction, is for the multitude ; but to mark the independent passion, the tumultuous separate existence of every wreath of writhing vapor, yet swept away and overpowered by one omnipotence of storm, and thus to bid us

§ 17. The individual character of its parts.

"Be as a Presence or a motion—one
Among the many there——while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapors, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth,
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument,"—

this belongs only to nature and to him.

The drawing of Coventry may be particularized as a farther example of this fine suggestion of irregularity and fitfulness, through very constant parallelism of direction, both in rain and clouds. The great mass of cloud, which traverses the whole picture, is characterized throughout by severe right lines, nearly parallel with each other, into which every one of its wreaths has a tendency to range itself; but no one of these right lines is actually and entirely parallel to any other, though all have a certain tendency, more or less defined in each, which impresses the mind with the most distinct *idea* of parallelism. Neither are any of the lines actually straight and unbroken; on the contrary, they are all made up of the most exquisite and varied curves, and it is the imagined line which joins the apices of these—a tangent to them all, which is in reality straight.* They are suggested, not represented, right lines; but the whole volume of cloud is visibly and totally bounded by them; and, in consequence, its whole body is felt to be dragged out and elongated by the force of the tempest which it carries with it, and every one of its wreaths to be (as was before explained) not so much something borne *before* or *by* the wind, as the visible form and presence of the wind itself. We could not possibly point out a more magnificent piece of drawing as a contrast to such works of Salvator as that before alluded to (159 Dulwich Gallery). Both are rolling masses of connected cloud; but in Turner's, there is not one curve that repeats another, nor one curve in itself monotonous, nor without character, and yet every part and portion of the cloud is rigidly subjected to the same forward, fierce, inevitable influence of storm. In Salvator's, every curve repeats its neighbor, every curve is monotonous in itself, and yet the whole cloud is curling about hither and thither, evidently without the slightest notion where it is going to, and unregulated by any general influence whatsoever. I could not bring together two finer or more instruc-

§ 18. Deep studied form of swift rain-cloud in the Coventry.

§ 19. Compared with forms given by Salvator.

---

* Note especially the dark uppermost outline of the mass.

tive examples, the one of everything that is perfect, the other of everything that is childish or abominable, in the representation of the same facts.

But there is yet more to be noticed in this noble sky of Turner's. Not only are the lines of the rolling cloud thus irregular in their parallelism, but those of the falling rain are equally varied in their direction, indicating the gusty changefulness of the wind, and yet kept so straight and stern in their individual descent, that we are not suffered to forget its strength. This impression is still farther enhanced by the drawing of the smoke, which blows every way at once, yet turning perpetually in each of its swirls back in the direction of the wind, but so suddenly and violently, as almost to assume the angular lines of lightning. Farther, to complete the impression, be it observed that all the cattle, both upon the near and distant hill-side, have left off grazing, and are standing stock still and stiff, with their heads down and their backs to the wind; and finally, that we may be told not only what the storm is, but what it has been, the gutter at the side of the road is gushing in a complete torrent, and particular attention is directed to it by the full burst of light in the sky being brought just above it, so that all its waves are bright with the reflection.

§ 20. Entire expression of tempest by minute touches and circumstances in the Coventry.

But I have not quite done with this noble picture yet. Impetuous clouds, twisted rain, flickering sunshine, fleeting shadow, gushing water, and oppressed cattle, all speak the same story of tumult, fitfulness, power, and velocity. Only one thing is wanted, a passage of repose to contrast with it all, and it is given. High and far above the dark volumes of the swift rain-cloud, are seen on the left, through their opening, the quiet, horizontal, silent flakes of the highest cirrus, resting in the repose of the deep sky. Of all else that we have noticed in this drawing, some faint idea can be formed from the engraving: but not the slightest of the delicate and soft forms of these pausing vapors, and still less of the exquisite depth and palpitating tenderness of the blue with which they are islanded. En-

§ 21. Especially by contrast with a passage of extreme repose.

gravers, indeed, invariably lose the effect of all passages of cold color, under the mistaken idea that it is to be kept *pale* in order to indicate distance; whereas it ought commonly to be darker than the rest of the sky.

§ 22. The truth of this particular passage. Perfectly pure blue sky only seen after rain, and how seen.

To appreciate the full truth of this passage, we must understand another effect peculiar to the rain-cloud, that its openings exhibit the purest blue which the sky ever shows. For, as we saw in the first chapter of this section, that aqueous vapor always turns the sky more or less gray, it follows that we never can see the azure so intense as when the greater part of this vapor has just fallen in rain. Then, and then only, pure blue sky becomes visible in the first openings, distinguished especially by the manner in which the clouds melt into it; their edges passing off in faint white threads and fringes, through which the blue shines more and more intensely, till the last trace of vapor is lost in its perfect color. It is only the upper white clouds, however, which do this, or the last fragments of rain-clouds, becoming white as they disappear, so that the blue is never *corrupted* by the cloud, but only paled and broken with pure white, the purest white which the sky ever shows. Thus we have a melting and palpitating color, never the same for two inches together, deepening and broadening here and there into intensity of perfect azure, then drifted and dying away through every tone of pure pale sky, into the snow white of the filmy cloud. Over this roll the determined edges of the rain-clouds, throwing it all far back, as a retired scene, into the upper sky. Of this effect the old masters, as far as I remember, have taken no cognizance whatsoever; all with them is, as we partially noticed before, either white cloud or pure blue: they have no notion of any double-dealing or middle measures. They bore a hole in the sky, and let you up into a pool of deep, stagnant blue, marked off by the clear round edges of imperturbable, impenetrable cloud on all sides—beautiful in positive color, but totally destitute of that exquisite gradation and change, that fleeting, panting, hesitating effort,

§ 23. Absence of this effect in the works of the old masters.

with which the first glance of the natural sky is shed through the turbulence of the earth-storm.

They have some excuse, however, for not attempting this, in the nature of their material, as one accidental dash of the brush with water-color on a piece of wet or damp paper, will come nearer the truth and transparency of this rain-blue than the labor of a day in oils; and the purity and felicity of some of the careless, melting water-color skies of Cox and Tayler may well make us fastidious in all effects of this kind. It is, however, only in the drawings of Turner that we have this perfect transparency and variation of blue, given in association with the perfection of considered form. In Tayler and Cox the forms are always partially accidental and unconsidered, often essentially bad, and always incomplete; in Turner the dash of the brush is as completely under the rule of thought and feeling as its slowest line; all that it does is perfect, and could not be altered, even in a hairbreadth, without injury; in addition to this, peculiar management and execution are used in obtaining quality in the color itself, totally different from the manipulation of any other artist; and none, who have ever spent so much as one hour of their lives over his drawing, can forget those dim passages of dreamy blue, barred and severed with a thousand delicate and soft and snowy forms, which, gleaming in their patience of hope between the troubled rushing of the racked earth-cloud, melt farther and farther back into the height of heaven, until the eye is bewildered and the heart lost in the intensity of their peace. I do not say that this is beautiful—I do not say it is ideal, nor refined—I only ask you to watch for the first opening of the clouds after the next south rain, and tell me if it be not *true?*

§ 24. Success of our water-color artists in its rendering. Use of it by Turner.

The Gosport affords us an instance more exquisite even than the passage above named in the Coventry, of the use of this melting and dewy blue, accompanied by two distances of rain-cloud, one towering over the horizon, seen blue with excessive distance through crystal atmosphere; the other breaking overhead in

§ 25. Expression of near rain-cloud in the Gosport, and other works.

the warm, sulphurous fragments of spray, whose loose and shattering transparency, being the most essential characteristic of the near rain-cloud, is precisely that which the old masters are sure to contradict. Look, for instance, at the wreaths of *cloud?* in the Dido and Æneas of Gaspar Poussin, with their unpleasant edges cut as hard and solid and opaque and smooth as thick black paint can make them, rolled up over one another like a dirty sail badly reefed; or look at the agreeable transparency and variety of the cloud-edge where it cuts the Mountain in N. Poussin's Phocion, and compare this with the wreaths which float across the precipice in the second vignette in Campbell, or which gather around the Ben Lomond, the white rain gleaming beneath their dark transparent shadows; or which drift up along the flanks of the wooded hills, called from the river by the morning light, in the Oakhampton; or which island the crags of Snowdon in the Llanberis, or melt along the Cumberland hills, while Turner leads us across the sands of Morecambe Bay. This last drawing deserves especial notice; it is of an evening in spring, when the south rain has ceased at sunset, and through the lulled and golden air, the confused and fantastic mists float up along the hollows of the mountains, white and pure, the resurrection in spirit of the new-fallen rain, catching shadows from the precipices, and mocking the dark peaks with their own mountain-like but melting forms till the solid mountains seem in motion like those waves of cloud, emerging and vanishing as the weak wind passes by their summits; while the blue, level night advances along the sea, and the surging breakers leap up to catch the last light from the path of the sunset.

§ 26. Contrasted with Gaspar Poussin's rain-cloud in the Dido and Æneas.

I need not, however, insist upon Turner's peculiar power of rendering *mist*, and all those passages of intermediate mystery, between earth and air, when the mountain is melting into the cloud, or the horizon into the twilight; because his supremacy in these points is altogether undisputed, except by persons to whom it would be impossible to prove anything which did not fall under the form of a Rule of Three. Nothing is more natural

§ 27. Turner's power of rendering mist.

than that the studied form and color of this great artist should be little understood, because they require for the full perception of their meaning and truth, such knowledge and such time as not one in a thousand possesses, or can bestow; but yet the truth of them for that very reason is capable of demonstration, and there is hope of our being able to make it in some degree felt and comprehended even by those to whom it is now a dead letter, or an offence. But the aerial and misty effects of landscape, being matters of which the eye should be simply cognizant, and without effort of thought, as it is of light, must, where they are exquisitely rendered, either be felt at once, or prove that degree of blindness and bluntness in the feelings of the observer which there is little hope of ever conquering. Of course for persons who have never seen in their lives a cloud vanishing on a mountain-side, and whose conceptions of mist or vapor are limited to ambiguous outlines of spectral hackney-coaches and bodiless lamp-posts, discerned through a brown combination of sulphur, soot, and gaslight, there is yet some hope; we cannot, indeed, tell them what the morning mist is like in mountain air, but far be it from us to tell them that they are incapable of feeling its beauty if they will seek it for themselves. But if you have ever in your life had one opportunity with your eyes and heart open, of seeing the dew rise from a hill-pasture, or the storm gather on a sea-cliff, and if you have yet no feeling for the glorious passages of mingled earth and heaven which Turner calls up before you into breathing, tangible being, there is indeed no hope for your apathy—art will never touch you, nor nature inform.

§ 28. His effects of mist so perfect, that if not at once understood, they can no more be explained or reasoned on than nature herself.

It would be utterly absurd, among the innumerable passages of this kind given throughout his works, to point to one as more characteristic or more perfect than another. The Simmer Lake, near Askrig, for expression of mist pervaded with sunlight,—the Lake Lucerne, a recent and unengraved drawing, for the recession of near mountain form, not into dark, but into *luminous* cloud, the most difficult thing to do in art,—the Harlech, for expres-

§ 29. Various instances.

sion of the same phenomena, shown over vast spaces in distant ranges of hills, the Ehrenbreitstein, a recent drawing, for expression of mist, rising from the surface of water at sunset,—and, finally, the glorious Oberwesel and Nemi,* for passages of all united, may, however, be named, as noble instances, though in naming five works I insult five hundred.

§ 30. Turner's more violent effects of tempest are never rendered by engravers.

One word respecting Turner's more violent storms, for we have hitherto been speaking only of the softer rain-clouds, associated with gusty tempest, but not of the thunder-cloud and the whirlwind. If there be any one point in which engravers disgrace themselves more than in another, it is in their rendering of dark and furious storm. It appears to be utterly impossible to force it into their heads, that an artist does *not* leave his color with a sharp edge and an angular form by accident, or that they may have the pleasure of altering it and improving upon it ; and equally impossible to persuade them that energy and gloom may in *some* circumstances be arrived at without any extraordinary expenditure of ink. I am aware of no engraver of the present day whose ideas of a storm-cloud are not comprised under two heads, roundness and blackness ; and, indeed, their general principles of translation (as may be distinctly gathered from their larger works) are the following : 1. Where the drawing is gray, make the paper black. 2. Where the drawing is white, cover the page with zigzag lines. 3. Where the drawing has particularly tender tones, cross-hatch them. 4. Where any outline is particularly angular, make it round. 5. Where there are vertical reflections in water, express them with very distinct horizontal lines. 6. Where there is a passage of particular simplicity, treat it in sections. 7. Where there is anything intentionally concealed, make it out. Yet, in spite of the necessity which all engravers impose upon themselves, of rigidly observing this code of general laws, it is difficult to conceive how such pieces of work, as the plates of Stonehenge and Winchelsea,

§ 31. General system of landscape engraving.

---

* In the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham.

can ever have been presented to the public, as in any way resembling, or possessing even the most fanciful relation to the Turner drawings of the same subjects. The original of the Stonehenge is perhaps the standard of storm-drawing, both for the overwhelming power and gigantic proportions and spaces of its cloud-forms, and for the tremendous qualities of lurid and sulphurous colors which are gained in them. All its forms are marked with violent angles, as if the whole muscular energy—so to speak—of the cloud, were writhing in every fold, and their fantastic and fiery volumes have a peculiar horror—an awful life—shadowed out in their strange, swift, fearful outlines, which oppress the mind more than even the threatening of their gigantic gloom. The white lightning, not as it is drawn by less observant or less capable painters, in zigzag fortifications, but in its own dreadful irregularity of streaming fire, is brought down, not merely over the dark clouds, but through the full light of an illumined opening to the blue, which yet cannot abate the brilliancy of its white line ; and the track of the last flash along the ground is fearfully marked by the dog howling over the fallen shepherd, and the ewe pressing her head upon the body of her dead lamb.

§ 32. The storm in the Stonehenge.

I have not space, however, to enter into examination of Turner's storm-drawing ; I can only warn the public against supposing that its effect is ever rendered by engravers. The great principles of Turner are angular outline, vastness and energy of form, infinity of gradation, and depth without blackness. The great principles of the engravers (*vide* Pæstum, in Rogers's Italy, and the Stonehenge, above alluded to) are rounded outline, no edges, want of character, equality of strength, and blackness without depth.

§ 33. General character of such effects as given by Turner. His expression of falling rain.

I have scarcely, I see, on referring to what I have written, sufficiently insisted on Turner's rendering of the rainy *fringe*, whether in distances, admitting or concealing more or less of the extended plain, as in the Waterloo, and Richmond (with the girl and dog in the foreground,) or as in the Dunstaffnage, Glencoe, St. Michael's Mount, and Slave Ship, not reaching the earth, but suspended in waving and twisted lines from the darkness of the zenith. But I have no time for farther development of particular points; I must defer discussion of them until we take up each picture to be viewed as a whole; for the division of the sky which I have been obliged to make, in order to render fully understood the peculiarities of character in the separate cloud regions, prevents my speaking of any one work with justice to its concentration of various truth. Be it always remembered that we pretend not, at present, to give any account or idea of the sum of the works of any painter, much less of the universality of Turner's; but only to explain in what real truth, as far as it is explicable, consists, and to illustrate it by those pictures in which it most distinctly occurs, or from which it is most visibly absent. And it will only be in the full and separate discussion of individual works, when we are acquainted also with what is beautiful, that we shall be completely able to prove or disprove the presence of the truth of nature.

§ 34. Recapitulation of the section.

The conclusion, then, to which we are led by our present examination of the truth of clouds, is, that the old masters attempted the representation of only one among the thousands of their systems of scenery, and were altogether false in the little they attempted; while we can find records in modern art of every form or phenomenon of the heavens, from the highest film that glorifies the ether to the wildest vapor that darkens the dust, and in all these records we find the most clear language and close thought, firm words, and true message, unstinted fulness and unfailing faith.

§ 35. Sketch of a few of the skies of nature, taken as a whole, compared with the works of Turner and of the old masters. Morning on the plains.

And indeed it is difficult for us to conceive how, even without such laborious investigation as we have gone through, any person can go to nature for a single day or hour, when she is really at work in any of her nobler spheres of action, and yet retain respect for the old masters; finding, as find he will, that every scene which rises, rests, or departs before him, bears with it a thousand glories of which there is not one shadow, one image, one trace or line, in any of their works; but which will illustrate to him, at every new instant, some passage which he had not before understood in the high works of modern art. Stand upon the peak of some isolated mountain at daybreak, when the night mists first rise from off the plains, and watch their white and lake-like fields as they float in level bays and winding gulfs about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight; watch when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts and passes away; and down under their depths, the glittering city and green pasture lie like Atlantis, between the white paths of winding rivers; the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills shorten their gray shadows upon the plain. Has Claude given this?

§ 36. Noon with gathering storms.

Wait a little longer, and you shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up towards you, along the winding valleys, till they couch in quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light,* upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose leagues of massy undulation will melt back and back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above, in the serene heaven, like a wild, bright, impossible dream, foundationless and inaccessible, their very bases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below.† Has Claude given this? Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the promontories, massy and motionless, only piled with every instant higher and higher into the sky,* and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks ; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapors,† which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their gray network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and the motion of the leaves together ; and then you will see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid wreaths create themselves, you know not how, along the shoulders of the hills ; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipices, as a hawk pauses over his prey.‡ Has Claude given this ? And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapor swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black, bending fringes,§ or pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go. And then, as the sun sinks, you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking, and loaded yet with snow-white torn, steam-like rags of capricious vapor, now gone, now gathered again ; ‖ while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away, but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all the air about it with blood.¶ Has Claude given this ? And then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills,** brighter—brighter yet, till the large white cir-

---

* I have often seen the white thin, morning cloud, edged with the seven colors of the prism. I am not aware of the cause of this phenomenon, for it takes place not when we stand with our backs to the sun, but in clouds near the sun itself, irregularly and over indefinite spaces, sometimes taking place in the body of the cloud. The colors are distinct and vivid, but have a kind of metallic lustre upon them.

† Lake Lucerne.

§ 37. Sunset in tempest. Serene midnight.

---

* St. Maurice (Rogers's Italy).

† Vignette, the great St. Bernard.

‡ Vignette of the Andes.

§ St. Michael's Mount—England series.

‖ Illustration to the Antiquary. Goldeau, a recent drawing of the highest order.

¶ Vignette to Campbell's Last Man.

** Caerlaverock.

cle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds,* step by step, line by line; star after star she quenches with her kindling light, setting in their stead an army of pale, penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the earth, which move together, hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion, that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them. Ask Claude, or his brethren, for that.

§ 38. And sunrise on the Alps.

And then wait yet for one hour, until the east again becomes purple,† and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning; watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire; watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning; their long avalanches cast down in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to the heaven; the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole heaven—one scarlet canopy,—is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing, vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels; and then, when you can look no more for gladness, and when you are bowed down with fear and love of the Maker and Doer of this, tell me who has best delivered this His message unto men!

CHAPTER V.

EFFECTS OF LIGHT RENDERED BY MODERN ART.

I HAVE before given my reasons (Sect. II. Chap. III.) for not wishing at present to enter upon the discussion of particular effects of light. Not only are we incapable of rightly

---

* St. Denis.

† Alps at Daybreak (Rogers's Poems:) Delphi, and various vignettes.

§ 1. Reasons for merely, at present, naming, without examining the particular effects of light rendered by Turner.

viewing them, or reasoning upon them, until we are acquainted with the principles of the beautiful; but, as I distinctly limited myself, in the present portion of the work, to the examination of *general* truths, it would be out of place to take cognizance of the particular phases of light, even if it were possible to do so, before we have some more definite knowledge of the material objects which they illustrate. I shall therefore, at present, merely set down a rough catalogue of the effects of light at different hours of the day, which Turner has represented: naming a picture or two, as an example of each, which we will hereafter take up one by one, and consider the physical science and the feeling together.

§ 2. Hopes of the author for assistance in the future investigation of them.

And I do this, in the hope that, in the meantime, some admirer of the old masters will be kind enough to select from the works of any one of them, a series of examples of the same effects, and to give me a reference to the pictures, so that I may be able to compare each with each; for, as my limited knowledge of the works of Claude or Poussin does not supply me with the requisite variety of effect, I shall be grateful for assistance.

The following list, of course, does not name the hundredth part of the effects of light given by Turner; it only names those which are distinctly and markedly separate from each other, and representative each of an entire class. Ten or twelve examples, often many more, might be given of each; every one of which would display the effects of the same hour and light, modified by different circumstances of weather, situation, and character of objects subjected to them, and especially by the management of the sky; but it will be generally sufficient for our purpose to examine thoroughly one good example of each.

The prefixed letters express the direction of the light. F. front light (the sun in the centre, or near the top of the picture;) L. lateral light, the sun out of the picture on the right or left of the spectator; L. F. the light partly lateral, partly fronting the spectator, as when he is looking south, with the sun in the south-west; L. B. light partly lateral, partly behind the spectator, as when he is looking north, with the sun in the south-west.

MORNING.

EFFECTS.	NAMES OF PICTURES.
L.....An hour before sunrise in winter. Violent storm, with rain, on the sea. Light-houses seen through it.	Lowestoffe, Suffolk.
F.....An hour before sunrise. Serene sky, with light clouds. Dawn in the distance.	Vignette to Voyage of Columbus.
L.....Ten minutes before sunrise. Violent storm. Torchlight.	Fowey Harbor.
F.....Sunrise. Sun only half above the horizon. Clear sky, with light cirri.	Vignette to Human Life.
F.....Sun just disengaged from horizon. Misty, with light cirri.	Alps at Daybreak.
F.....Sun a quarter of an hour risen. Sky covered with scarlet clouds.	Castle Upnor.
L. F...Serene sky. Sun emerging from a bank of cloud on horizon, a quarter of an hour risen.	Orford, Suffolk.
L. F...Same hour. Light mists in flakes on hillsides. Clear air.	Skiddaw.
L. F...Light flying rain-clouds gathering in valleys. Same hour.	Oakhampton.
L. B...Same hour. A night storm rising off the mountains. Dead calm.	Lake of Geneva.
L.....Sun half an hour risen. Cloudless sky.	Beaugency.
L.....Same hour. Light mists lying in the valleys.	Kirby Lonsdale.
F.....Same hour. Bright cirri. Sun dimly seen through battle smoke, with conflagration.	Hohenlinden.
L.....Sun an hour risen. Cloudless and clear.	Buckfastleigh.

NOON AND AFTERNOON.

L. B...Midday. Dead calm, with heat. Cloudless.	Corinth.
L.....Same hour Serene and bright, with streaky clouds.	Lantern at St. Cloud.
L.....Same hour. Serene, with multitudes of the high cirrus.	Shylock, and other Venices.

EFFECTS.	NAMES OF PICTURES.
L.....Bright sun, with light wind and clouds.	Richmond. Middlesex.
F.....Two o'clock. Clouds gathering for rain, with heat.	Warwick. Blenheim.
F.....Rain beginning, with light clouds and wind.	Piacenza.
L.....Soft rain, with heat.	Caldron Snout Fall.
L.F...Great heat. Thunder gathering.	Malvern.
L.....Thunder breaking down, after intense heat, with furious wind.	Winchelsea.
L.....Violent rain and wind, but cool.	Llamberis, Coventry, &c
L.F...Furious storm, with thunder.	Stonehenge, Pæstum, &c.
L.B...Thunder retiring, with rainbow. Dead calm, with heat.	Nottingham.
L.....About three o'clock, summer. Air very cool and clear. Exhausted thunder-clouds low on hills.	Bingen.
F.....Descending sunbeams through soft clouds, after rain.	Carew Castle.
L.....Afternoon, very clear, after rain. A few clouds still on horizon. Dead calm.	Saltash.
F.....Afternoon of cloudless day, with heat.	Mercury and Argus. Oberwesel. Nemi.

EVENING.

L.....An hour before sunset. Cloudless.	Trematon Castle.
F.....Half an hour before sunset. Light clouds. Misty air.	Lake Albano. Florence.
F.....Within a quarter of an hour of sunset. Mists rising. Light cirri.	Dater Hora Quieti.
L.F...Ten minutes before sunset. Quite cloudless.	Durham.
F.....Same hour. Tumultuous spray of illumined rain-cloud.	Solomon's Pools. Slave-ship.
F.....Five minutes before sunset. Sky covered with illumined cirri.	Temeraire. Napoleon. Various vignettes.
L.B...Same hour. Serene sky. Full moon rising.	Kenilworth.
F.....Sun setting. Detached light cirri and clear air.	Amboise.
L.....Same hour. Cloudless. New moon.	Troyes.
L.F...Same hour. Heavy storm clouds. Moonrise.	First vignette. Pleasures of Memory.

EFFECTS.	NAMES OF PICTURES.
L.B. . .Sun just set. Sky covered with clouds. New moon setting.	Caudebec.
L.B. . .Sun five minutes set. Strong twilight, with storm clouds. Full moonrise.	Wilderness of Engedi. Assos.
L.B. . .Same hour. Serene, with light clouds.	Montjan.
L.B. . .Same hour. Serene. New moon.	Pyramid of Caius Cestius.
L.B. . .Sun a quarter of an hour set. Cloudless.	Chateau de Blois.
L.F. . .Sun half an hour set. Light cirri.	Clairmont.
F. . . . .Same hour. Dead calm at sea. New moon and evening star.	Cowes.
F. . . . .Sun three quarters of an hour set. Moon struggling through storm clouds, over heavy sea.	Folkestone.

NIGHT.

F. . . . .An hour after sunset. No moon. Torchlight.	St. Julien. Tours.
F. . . . .Same hour. Moon rising. Fire from furnaces.	Dudley.
L.F. . .Same hour, with storm clouds. Moon rising.	Nantes.
L. . . . .Same hour, with light of rockets and fire.	Juliet and her Nurse.
F. . . . .Midnight. Moonless, with light-houses.	Calais.
Same hour, with fire-light.	Burning of Parliament Houses.
F. . . . .Ditto. Full moon. Clear air, with delicate clouds. Light-houses.	Towers of the Hevé.
F. . . . .Ditto, with conflagration, battle smoke, and storm.	Waterloo.
F. . . . .Ditto. Moonlight through mist. Buildings illuminated in interior.	Vignette. St. Herbert's Isle.
F. . . . .Ditto. Full moon with halo. Light rainclouds.	St. Denis.
F. . . . .Full moon. Perfectly serene. Sky covered with white cirri.	Alnwick. Vignette of Rialto, & Bridge of Sighs.

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME II.

CONTAINING

PART II.—III.

OF TRUTH AND THEORETIC FACULTIES

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE STONES OF VENICE," ETC., ETC.

. . . . . "Accuse me not
Of arrogance, ...
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men.
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence."
WORDSWORTH

ALBANY
JAMES B. LYON
36 BEAVER STREET

TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

To

THE LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER

THE AUTHOR

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS.

PART II.—(*Continued.*)

OF TRUTH.

SECTION IV.

OF TRUTH OF EARTH.

CHAPTER I.—Of General Structure.

PAGE
§ 1. First laws of the organization of the earth, and their importance in art 21
§ 2. The slight attention ordinarily paid to them. Their careful study by modern artists 22
§ 3. General structure of the earth. The hills are its action, the plains its rest 23
§ 4. Mountains come out from underneath the plains, and are their support 23
§ 5. Structure of the plains themselves. Their perfect level, when deposited by quiet water 24
§ 6. Illustrated by Turner's Marengo 25
§ 7. General divisions of formation resulting from this arrangement. Plan of investigation 25

CHAPTER II.—Of the Central Mountains.

§ 1. Similar character of the central peaks in all parts of the world 26
§ 2. Their arrangements in pyramids or wedges, divided by vertical fissures 26
§ 3. Causing groups of rock resembling an artichoke or rose .. 27

PAGE
§ 4. The faithful statement of these facts by Turner in his Alps at Daybreak.......... 27
§ 5. Vignette of the Andes and others.......... 28
§ 6. Necessary distance, and consequent aerial effect on all such mountains.......... 29
§ 7. Total want of any rendering of their phenomena in ancient art.......... 29
§ 8. Character of the representations of Alps in the distances of Claude.......... 30
§ 9. Their total want of magnitude and aerial distance.......... 30
§ 10. And violation of specific form.......... 31
§ 11. Even in his best works.......... 32
§ 12. Farther illustration of the distant character of mountain chains.......... 33
§ 13. Their excessive appearance of transparency.......... 33
§ 14. Illustrated from the works of Turner and Stanfield. The Borromean Islands of the latter.......... 34
§ 15. Turner's Arona.......... 34
§ 16. Extreme distance of large objects always characterized by very sharp outline.......... 35
§ 17. Want of this decision in Claude.......... 36
§ 18. The perpetual rendering of it by Turner.......... 37
§ 19. Effects of snow, how imperfectly studied.......... 37
§ 20. General principles of its forms on the Alps.......... 39
§ 21. Average paintings of Switzerland. Its real spirit has scarcely yet been caught.......... 41

CHAPTER III.—OF THE INFERIOR MOUNTAINS.

§ 1. The inferior mountains are distinguished from the central by being divided into beds.......... 42
§ 2. Farther division of these beds by joints.......... 42
§ 3. And by lines of lamination.......... 43
§ 4. Variety and seeming uncertainty under which these laws are manifested.......... 43
§ 5. The perfect expression of them in Turner's Loch Coriskin 44
§ 6. Glencoe and other works.......... 45
§ 7. Especially the Mount Lebanon.......... 46
§ 8. Compared with the work of Salvator.......... 46
§ 9. And of Poussin.......... 47
§ 10. Effects of external influence on mountain form.......... 48
§ 11. The gentle convexity caused by aqueous erosion.......... 49
§ 12. And the effect of the action of torrents.......... 50
§ 13. The exceeding simplicity of contour caused by these influences.......... 51

PAGE
§ 14. And multiplicity of feature 51
§ 15. Both utterly neglected in ancient art.................. 52
§ 16. The fidelity of treatment in Turner's Daphne and Leucippus.. 52
§ 17. And in the Avalanche and Inundation 53
§ 18. The rarity among secondary hills of steep slopes or high precipices... 54
§ 19. And consequent expression of horizontal distance in their ascent 55
§ 20. Full statement of all these facts in various works of Turner,—Caudebec, etc............................ 55
§ 21. The use of considering geological truths............... 56
§ 22. Expression of retiring surface by Turner contrasted with the work of Claude................................ 57
§ 23. The same moderation of slope in the contours of his higher hills 57
§ 24. The peculiar difficulty of investigating the more essential truths of hill outline.......................... 58
§ 25. Works of other modern artists. Clarkson Stanfield 59
§ 26. Importance of particular and individual truth in hill drawing 59
§ 27. Works of Copley Fielding. His hill feeling 60
§ 28. Works of J. D. Harding and others.................... 61

CHAPTER IV.—OF THE FOREGROUND.

§ 1. What rocks were the chief components of ancient landscape foreground 62
§ 2. Salvator's limestones. The real characters of the rock. Its fractures, and obtuseness of angles 62
§ 3. Salvator's acute angles caused by the meeting of concave curves 63
§ 4. Peculiar distinctness of light and shade in the rocks of nature 64
§ 5. Peculiar confusion of both in the rocks of Salvator..... 64
§ 6. And total want of any expression of hardness or brittleness.. 65
§ 7. Instances in particular pictures........................ 65
§ 8. Compared with the works of Stanfield 65
§ 9. Their absolute opposition in every particular 66
§ 10. The rocks of J. D. Harding 67
§ 11. Characters of loose earth and soil..................... 68
§ 12. Its exceeding grace and fulness of feature............. 68
§ 13. The ground of Teniers 69

PAGE
§ 14. Importance of these minor parts and points 69
§ 15. The observance of them is the real distinction between the master and the novice........................ 70
§ 16. The Ground of Cuyp 70
§ 17. And of Claude.................................. 71
§ 18. The entire weakness and childishness of the latter 71
§ 19. Compared with the work of Turner.................. 72
§ 20. General features of Turner's foreground 72
§ 21. Geological structure of his rocks in the Fall of the Tees 73
§ 22. Their convex surfaces and fractured edges 73
§ 23. And perfect unity....... 74
§ 24. Various parts whose history is told us by the details of the drawing.................................. 74
§ 25. Beautiful instance of an exception to general rules in the Llanthony.................................. 75
§ 26. Turner's drawing of detached blocks of weathered stone 76
§ 27. And of complicated foreground 77
§ 28. And of loose soil.................................. 77
§ 29. The unison of all in the ideal foregrounds of the Academy pictures 78
§ 30. And the great lesson to be received from all.......... 78

SECTION V.

OF TRUTH OF WATER.

CHAPTER I.—Of Water, as Painted by the Ancients.

§ 1. Sketch of the functions and infinite agency of water.... 80
§ 2. The ease with which a common representation of it may be given. The impossibility of a faithful one 81
§ 3. Difficulty of properly dividing the subject............. 81
§ 4. Inaccuracy of study of water-effect among all painters.. 81
§ 5. Difficulty of treating this part of the subject 83
§ 6. General laws which regulate the phenomena of water. First, the imperfection of its reflective surface...... 85
§ 7. The inherent hue of water modifies dark reflections, and does not affect bright ones........................ 85
§ 8. Water takes no shadow............................. 87
§ 9. Modification of dark reflections by shadow............ 88
§ 10. Examples on the water of the Rhone................. 89
§ 11. Effect of ripple on distant water..... 91
§ 12. Elongation of reflections by moving water............ 91
§ 13. Effect of rippled water on horizontal and inclined images 92

PAGE
§ 14. To what extent reflection is visible from above......... 93
§ 15. Deflection of images on agitated water................ 93
§ 16. Necessity of watchfulness as well as of science. Licenses, how taken by great men.......................... 93
§ 17. Various licenses or errors in water painting of Claude, Cuyp, Vandevelde.............................. 95
§ 18. And Canaletto.................................. 97
§ 19. Why unpardonable................................ 99
§ 20. The Dutch painters of sea......................... 100
§ 21. Ruysdael, Claude, and Salvator...................... 101
§ 22. Nicholas Poussin................................. 102
§ 23. Venetians and Florentines. Conclusion............... 103

CHAPTER II.—Of Water, as Painted by the Moderns.

§ 1. General power of the moderns in painting quiet water. The lakes of Fielding............................ 104
§ 2. The calm rivers of De Wint, J. Holland, &c........... 104
§ 3. The character of bright and violent falling water 105
§ 4. As given by Nesfield.............................. 105
§ 5. The admirable water-drawing of J. D. Harding........ 106
§ 6. His color; and painting of sea...................... 107
§ 7. The sea of Copley Fielding. Its exceeding grace and rapidity.. 107
§ 8. Its high aim at character.......................... 108
§ 9. But deficiency in the requisite quality of grays........ 108
§ 10. Variety of the grays of nature...................... 109
§ 11. Works of Stanfield. His perfect knowledge and power. 109
§ 12. But want of feeling. General sum of truth presented by modern art.................................. 110

CHAPTER III.—Of Water, as Painted by Turner.

§ 1. The difficulty of giving surface to smooth water........ 111
§ 2. Is dependent on the structure of the eye, and the focus by which the reflected rays are perceived........... 111
§ 3. Morbid clearness occasioned in painting of water by distinctness of reflections.......................... 112
§ 4. How avoided by Turner 113
§ 5. All reflections on distant water are distinct............ 114
§ 6. The error of Vandevelde........................... 114
§ 7. Difference in arrangement of parts between the reflected object and its image............................. 115
§ 8. Illustrated from the works of Turner................. 116
§ 9. The boldness and judgment shown in the observance of it. 117

PAGE
§ 10. The *texture* of surface in Turner's painting of calm water.......................... 117
§ 11. Its united qualities.......................... 118
§ 12. Relation of various circumstances of past agitation, etc., by the most trifling incidents, as in the Cowes....... 119
§ 13. In scenes on the Loire and Seine.................... 120
§ 14. Expression of contrary waves caused by recoil from shore 121
§ 15. Various other instances.......................... 121
§ 16. Turner's painting of distant expanses of water. Calm, interrupted by ripple.......................... 122
§ 17. And ripple, crossed by sunshine....................... 122
§ 18. His drawing of distant rivers......................... 123
§ 19. And of surface associated with mist.................. 124
§ 20. His drawing of falling water, with peculiar expression of weight.......................... 124
§ 21. The abandonment and plunge of great cataracts. How given by him.......................... 125
§ 22. Difference in the action of water, when continuous and when interrupted. The interrupted stream fills the hollows of its bed.......................... 126
§ 23. But the continuous stream takes the shape of its bed.. 127
§ 24. Its exquisite curved lines.......................... 127
§ 25. Turner's careful choice of the historical truth......... 128
§ 26. His exquisite drawing of the continuous torrent in the Llanthony Abbey.......................... 128
§ 27. And of the interrupted torrent in the Mercury and Argus. 129
§ 28. Various cases.......................... 130
§ 29. Sea painting. Impossibility of truly representing foam. 130
§ 30. Character of shore-breakers, also inexpressible........ 132
§ 31. Their effect, how injured when seen from the shore.... 133
§ 32. Turner's expression of heavy rolling sea.............. 133
§ 33. With peculiar expression of weight................... 134
§ 34. Peculiar action of recoiling waves.................... 135
§ 35. And of the stroke of a breaker on the shore.......... 135
§ 36. General character of sea on a rocky coast given by Turner in the Land's End.......................... 136
§ 37. Open seas of Turner's earlier times.................. 137
§ 38. Effect of sea after prolonged storm.................. 138
§ 39. Turner's noblest work, the painting of the deep open sea in the Slave Ship.......................... 140
§ 40. Its united excellences and perfection as a whole....... 141

SECTION VI.

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER I.—OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.

PAGE
§ 1. Frequent occurrence of foliage in the works of the old masters.......... 142
§ 2. Laws common to all forest trees. Their branches do not taper, but only divide.......... 143
§ 3. Appearance of tapering caused by frequent buds...... 143
§ 4. And care of nature to conceal the parallelism.......... 144
§ 5. The degree of tapering which may be represented as continuous.......... 144
§ 6. The trees of Gaspar Poussin.......... 144
§ 7. And of the Italian school generally, defy this law...... 145
§ 8. The truth, as it is given by J. D. Harding.......... 145
§ 9. Boughs, in consequence of this law, *must* diminish where they divide. Those of the old masters often do not. 146
§ 10. Boughs must multiply as they diminish. Those of the old masters do not.......... 147
§ 11. Bough-drawing of Salvator.......... 148
§ 12. All these errors especially shown in Claude's sketches, and concentrated in a work of G. Poussin's.......... 149
§ 13. Impossibility of the angles of boughs being taken out of them by wind.......... 150
§ 14. Bough-drawing of Titian.......... 151
§ 15. Bough-drawing of Turner.......... 152
§ 16. Leafage. Its variety and symmetry.......... 153
§ 17. Perfect regularity of Poussin.......... 154
§ 18. Exceeding intricacy of nature's foliage.......... 154
§ 19. How contradicted by the tree-patterns of G. Poussin.... 155
§ 20. How followed by Creswick.......... 156
§ 21. Perfect unity in nature's foliage.......... 157
§ 22. Total want of it in Both and Hobbima.......... 157
§ 23. How rendered by Turner.......... 158
§ 24. The near leafage of Claude. His middle distances are good.......... 158
§ 25. Universal termination of trees in symmetrical curves... 159
§ 26. Altogether unobserved by the old masters Always given by Turner.......... 160
§ 27. Foliage painting on the Continent.......... 161
§ 28. Foliage of J. D. Harding. Its deficiencies.......... 162
§ 29. His brilliancy of execution too manifest.......... 162

PAGE
§ 30. His bough-drawing and choice of form................ 163
§ 31. Local color, how far expressible in black and white, and with what advantage............................ 164
§ 32. Opposition between great manner and great knowledge 165
§ 33. Foliage of Cox, Fielding, and Cattermole.............. 166
§ 34. Hunt and Creswick. Green, how to be rendered expressive of light, and offensive if otherwise.......... 166
§ 35. Conclusion. Works of J. Linnell and S. Palmer........ 167

CHAPTER II.—GENERAL REMARKS RESPECTING THE TRUTH OF TURNER.

§ 1. No necessity of entering into discussion of architectural truth.. 168
§ 2. Extreme difficulty of illustrating or explaining the highest truth 169
§ 3. The *positive* rank of Turner is in no degree shown in the foregoing pages, but only his relative rank.......... 170
§ 4. The exceeding refinement of his truth................. 170
§ 5. There is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge 171
§ 6. And nothing which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy.. 171
§ 7. His former rank and progress......................... 172
§ 8. Standing of his present works. Their mystery is the consequence of their fulness....................... 172

CHAPTER III.—CONCLUSION.—MODERN ART AND MODERN CRITICISM.

§ 1. The entire prominence hitherto given to the works of one artist caused only by our not being able to take cognizance of *character*............................ 173
§ 2. The feelings of different artists are incapable of full comparison 174
§ 3. But the fidelity and truth of each are capable of real comparison.. 174
§ 4. Especially because they are equally manifested in the treatment of all subjects 175
§ 5. No man draws one thing well, if he can draw nothing else 175
§ 6. General conclusions to be derived from our past investigation 176
§ 7. Truth, a standard of all excellence.................... 176

PAGE
§ 8. Modern criticism. Changefulness of public taste...... 177
§ 9. Yet associated with a certain degree of judgment...... 177
§ 10. Duty of the press.. 178
§ 11. Qualifications necessary for discharging it.............. 178
§ 12. General incapability of modern critics.................. 178
§ 13. And inconsistency with themselves..................... 179
§ 14. How the press may really advance the cause of art..... 179
§ 15. Morbid fondness at the present day for unfinished works 180
§ 16. By which the public defraud themselves 180
§ 17. And in pandering to which, artists ruin themselves 180
§ 18. Necessity of finishing works of art perfectly........... 181
§ 19. *Sketches* not sufficiently encouraged................... 182
§ 20. Brilliancy of execution or efforts at invention not to be tolerated in young artists 182
§ 21. The duty and after privileges of all students 182
§ 22. Necessity among our greater artists of more singleness of aim 183
§ 23. What should be their general aim 185
§ 24. Duty of the press with respect to the works of Turner.. 187

PART III.

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

SECTION I.

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.—Of the Rank and Relations of the Theoretic Faculty.

§ 1. With what care the subject is to be approached........ 190
§ 2. And of what importance considered 191
§ 3. The doubtful force of the term "utility"............. 192
§ 4. Its proper sense.. 193
§ 5. How falsely applied in these times.................... 193
§ 6. The evil consequences of such interpretation. How connected with national power.................. 194
§ 7. How to be averted 195
§ 8. Division of the pursuits of men into subservient and objective 198

PAGE
§ 9. Their relative dignities........................ 199
§ 10. How reversed through erring notions of the contemplative and imaginative faculties........................ 199
§ 11. Object of the present section........................ 200

CHAPTER II.—OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY AS CONCERNED WITH PLEASURES OF SENSE.

§ 1. Explanation of the term "theoretic"................ 201
§ 2. Of the differences of rank in pleasures of sense........ 201
§ 3. Use of the terms Temperate and Intemperate.......... 202
§ 4. Right use of the term "intemperate"................ 202
§ 5. Grounds of inferiority in the pleasures which are subjects of intemperance........................ 204
§ 6. Evidence of higher rank in pleasures of sight and hearing........................ 204
§ 7. How the lower pleasures may be elevated in rank...... 205
§ 8. Ideas of beauty how essentially moral................ 206
§ 9. How degraded by heartless reception................ 207
§ 10. How exalted by affection........................ 207

CHAPTER III.—OF ACCURACY AND INACCURACY IN IMPRESSIONS OF SENSE.

§ 1. By what test is the health of the perceptive faculty to be determined?........................ 208
§ 2. And in what sense may the terms Right and Wrong be attached to its conclusions?........................ 209
§ 3. What power we have over impressions of sense........ 210
§ 4. Depends on acuteness of attention................ 211
§ 5. Ultimate conclusions universal................ 211
§ 6. What duty is attached to this power over impressions of sense........................ 212
§ 7. How rewarded........................ 213
§ 8. Especially with respect to ideas of beauty............ 213
§ 9. Errors induced by the power of habit................ 214
§ 10. The necessity of submission in early stages of judgment 214
§ 11. The large scope of matured judgment................ 215
§ 12. How distinguishable from false taste................ 215
§ 13. The danger of a spirit of choice................ 216
§ 14. And criminality........................ 216
§ 15. How certain conclusions respecting beauty are by reason demonstrable........................ 217
§ 16. With what liabilities to error................ 218
§ 17. The term "beauty" how limitable in the outset. Divided into typical and vital................ 218

PAGE

CHAPTER IV.—OF FALSE OPINIONS HELD CONCERNING BEAUTY.

§ 1. Of the false opinion that truth is beauty, and vice versa 220
§ 2. Of the false opinion that beauty is usefulness. Compare Chap. xii. § 5 221
§ 3. Of the false opinion that beauty results from custom. Compare Chap. vi. § 1 221
§ 4. The twofold operation of custom. It deadens sensation, but confirms affection 221
§ 5. But never either creates or destroys the essence of beauty 222
§ 6. Instances 222
§ 7. Of the false opinion that beauty depends on the association of ideas....................... 223
§ 8. Association. Is, 1st, rational. It is of no efficiency as a cause of beauty................ 224
§ 9. Association accidental. The extent of its influence.... 224
§ 10. The dignity of its function.......................... 225
§ 11. How it is connected with impressions of beauty........ 226
§ 12. And what caution it renders necessary in the examination of them................................. 227

CHAPTER V.—OF TYPICAL BEAUTY:—FIRST, OF INFINITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY.

§ 1. Impossibility of adequately treating the subject........ 228
§ 2. With what simplicity of feeling to be approached....... 228
§ 3. The child instinct respecting space.................... 230
§ 4. Continued in after life......................... 230
§ 5. Whereto this instinct is traceable..................... 231
§ 6. Infinity how necessary in art...... 232
§ 7. Conditions of its necessity.......................... 232
§ 8. And connected analogies........................ ... 233
§ 9. How the dignity of treatment is proportioned to the expression of infinity................................ 234
§ 10. Examples among the Southern schools............... 234
§ 11. Among the Venetians................................ 235
§ 12. Among the painters of landscape.................... 235
§ 13. Other modes in which the power of infinity is felt...... 236
§ 14. The beauty of curvature............................ 236
§ 15. How constant in external nature.................... 237
§ 16. The beauty of gradation............................ 238
§ 17. How found in Nature......... 238
§ 18. How necessary in Art............................... 239
§ 19. Infinity not rightly implied by vastness................ 240

PAGE

CHAPTER VI.—OF UNITY, OF THE TYPE OF THE DIVINE COMPREHENSIVENESS.

§ 1. The general conception of divine Unity 240
§ 2. The glory of all things is their Unity 241
§ 3. The several kinds of unity. Subjectional. Original. Of sequence, and of membership 242
§ 4. Unity of membership. How secured 243
§ 5. Variety. Why required 243
§ 6. Change, and its influence on beauty 244
§ 7. The love of change. How morbid and evil 245
§ 8. The conducing of variety towards unity of subjection .. 246
§ 9. And towards unity of sequence 248
§ 10. The nature of proportion. 1st, of apparent proportion. 248
§ 11. The value of apparent proportion in curvature 251
§ 12. How by nature obtained 252
§ 13. Apparent proportion in melodies of line 253
§ 14. Error of Burke in this matter 253
§ 15. Constructive proportion. Its influence in plants 254
§ 16. And animals 255
§ 17. Summary 256

CHAPTER VII.—OF REPOSE, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE PERMANENCE.

§ 1. Universal feeling respecting the necessity of repose in art. Its sources 256
§ 2. Repose, how expressed in matter 257
§ 3. The necessity to repose of an implied energy 258
§ 4. Mental repose, how noble 258
§ 5. Its universal value as a test of art 259
§ 6. Instances in the Laocoon and Theseus 260
§ 7. And in altar tombs 262

CHAPTER VIII.—OF SYMMETRY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE JUSTICE.

§ 1. Symmetry, what and how found in organic nature 263
§ 2. How necessary in art 264
§ 3. To what its agreeableness is referable. Various instances 264
§ 4. Especially in religious art 265

CHAPTER IX.—OF PURITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE ENERGY.

§ 1. The influence of light as a sacred symbol 266
§ 2. The idea of purity connected with it 266

PAGE
§ 3. Originally derived from conditions of matter.......... 267
§ 4. Associated ideas adding to the power of the impression. Influence of clearness.......................... 267
§ 5. Perfect beauty of surface, in what consisting.......... 268
§ 6. Purity only metaphorically a type of sinlessness 269
§ 7. Energy, how expressed by purity of matter.......... .. 270
§ 8. And of color.................................... 270
§ 9. Spirituality, how so expressed 271

CHAPTER X.—OF MODERATION, OR THE TYPE OF GOVERNMENT BY LAW.

§ 1. Meaning of the terms Chasteness and Refinement...... 272
§ 2. How referable to temporary fashions.................. 272
§ 3. How to the perception of completion 272
§ 4. Finish, by great masters esteemed essential........... 272
§ 5. Moderation, its nature and value..................... 274
§ 6. It is the girdle of beauty............................ 275
§ 7. How found in natural curves and colors............... 275
§ 8. How difficult of attainment, yet essential to all good... 276

CHAPTER XI.—GENERAL INFERENCES RESPECTING TYPICAL BEAUTY.

§ 1. The subject incompletely treated, yet admitting of general conclusions.................. 277
§ 2. Typical beauty not created for man's sake............. 277
§ 3. But degrees of it for his sake admitted................ 278
§ 4. What encouragement hence to be received........... 278

CHAPTER XII.—OF VITAL BEAUTY. FIRST, AS RELATIVE.

§ 1. Transition from typical to vital Beauty............... 279
§ 2. The perfection of the theoretic faculty as concerned with vital beauty, is charity....................... 281
§ 3. Only with respect to plants, less affection than sympathy 282
§ 4. Which is proportioned to the appearance of energy in the plants.. 283
§ 5. This sympathy is unselfish, and does not regard utility.. 284
§ 6. Especially with respect to animals.................... 285
§ 7. And it is destroyed by evidences of mechanism......... 286
§ 8. The second perfection of the theoretic faculty as concerned with life is justice of moral judgment........ 287
§ 9. How impeded..................................... 288
§ 10. The influence of moral signs in expression............ 288

PAGE
§ 11. As also in plants........................ 290
§ 12. Recapitulation........................ 291

CHAPTER XIII.—OF VITAL BEAUTY. SECONDLY, AS GENERIC.

§ 1. The beauty of fulfilment of appointed function in every animal........................ 292
§ 2. The two senses of the word "ideal." Either it refers to action of the imagination........................ 293
§ 3. Or to perfection of type........................ 294
§ 4. This last sense how inaccurate, yet to be retained...... 295
§ 5. Of Ideal form. First, in the lower animals........... 295
§ 6. In what consistent........................ 296
§ 7. Ideal form in vegetables........................ 296
§ 8. The difference of position between plants and animals. 297
§ 9. Admits of variety in the ideal of the former........... 297
§ 10. Ideal form in vegetables destroyed by cultivation...... 298
§ 11. Instance in the Soldanella and Ranunculus............ 299
§ 12. The beauty of repose and felicity, how consistent with such ideal........................ 300
§ 13. The ideality of Art........................ 301
§ 14. How connected with the imaginative faculties......... 301
§ 15. Ideality, how belonging to ages and conditions........ 301

CHAPTER XIV.—OF VITAL BEAUTY. THIRDLY, IN MAN.

§ 1. Condition of the human creature entirely different from that of the lower animals........................ 302
§ 2. What room here for idealization........................ 303
§ 3. How the conception of the bodily ideal is reached.... 304
§ 4. Modifications of the bodily ideal owing to influence of mind. First, of intellect........................ 304
§ 5. Secondly, of the moral feelings........................ 305
§ 6. What beauty is bestowed by them........................ 306
§ 7. How the soul culture interferes harmfully with the bodily ideal........................ 307
§ 8. The inconsistency among the effects of the mental virtues on the form........................ 307
§ 9. Is a sign of God's kind purpose towards the race....... 308
§ 10. Consequent separation and difference of ideals....... 309
§ 11. The *effects* of the Adamite curse are to be distinguished from signs of its immediate activity................ 310
§ 12. Which latter only are to be banished from ideal form... 310
§ 13. Ideal form is only to be obtained by portraiture....... 311
§ 14. Instances among the greater of the ideal Masters...... 312
§ 15. Evil results of opposite practice in modern times...... 313
§ 16. The right use of the model........................ 313

PAGE
§ 17. Ideal form to be reached only by love........ 313
§ 18. Practical principles deducible 314
§ 19. Expressions chiefly destructive of ideal character. 1st, Pride... 314
§ 20. Portraiture ancient and modern...................... 315
§ 21. Secondly, Sensuality................................ 316
§ 22. How connected with impurity of color................ 316
§ 23. And prevented by its splendor....................... 317
§ 24. Or by severity of drawing........................... 317
§ 25. Degrees of descent in this respect: Rubens, Correggio, and Guido 318
§ 26. And modern art...................................... 318
§ 27. Thirdly, ferocity and fear. The latter how to be distinguished from awe................................ 319
§ 28. Holy fear, how distinct from human terror 319
§ 29. Ferocity is joined always with fear. Its unpardonableness.. 320
§ 30. Such expressions how sought by painters powerless and impious.. 320
§ 31. Of passion generally................................ 322
§ 32. It is never to be for itself exhibited—at least on the face. 322
§ 33. Recapitulation 324

CHAPTER XV.—GENERAL CONCLUSIONS RESPECTING THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

§ 1. There are no sources of the emotion of beauty more than those found in things visible........................ 325
§ 2. What imperfection exists in visible things. How in a sort by imagination removable 326
§ 3. Which however affects not our present conclusions 327
§ 4. The four sources from which the pleasure of beauty is derived are all divine............................... 327
§ 5. What objections may be made to this conclusion........ 327
§ 6. Typical beauty may be æsthetically pursued. Instances. 328
§ 7. How interrupted by false feeling...................... 329
§ 8. Greatness and truth are sometimes by the Deity sustained and spoken in and through evil men................ 330
§ 9. The second objection arising from the coldness of Christian men to external beauty............. 331
§ 10. Reasons for this coldness in the anxieties of the world. These anxieties overwrought and criminal.......... 332
§ 11. Evil consequences of such coldness.................. 333
§ 12. Theoria the service of Heaven....................... 333

SECTION II.

OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.—OF THE THREE FORMS OF IMAGINATION.

PAGE
§ 1. A partial examination only of the imagination is to be attempted 334
§ 2. The works of the metaphysicians how nugatory with respect to this faculty 335
§ 3. The definition of D. Stewart, how inadequate 336
§ 4. This instance nugatory 337
§ 5. Various instances 337
§ 6. The three operations of the imagination. Penetrative, associative, contemplative 339

CHAPTER II.—OF IMAGINATION ASSOCIATIVE.

§ 1. Of simple conception 339
§ 2. How connected with verbal knowledge 340
§ 3. How used in composition 341
§ 4. Characteristics of composition 342
§ 5. What powers are implied by it. The first of the three functions of fancy 342
§ 6. Imagination not yet manifested 343
§ 7. Imagination is the correlative conception of imperfect component parts 344
§ 8. Material analogy with imagination 344
§ 9. The grasp and dignity of imagination 345
§ 10. Its limits 346
§ 11. How manifested in treatment of uncertain relations. Its deficiency illustrated 347
§ 12. Laws of art, the safeguard of the unimaginative 348
§ 13. Are by the imaginative painter despised. Tests of imagination 349
§ 14. The monotony of unimaginative treatment 349
§ 15. Imagination never repeats itself 350
§ 16. Relation of the imaginative faculty to the theoretic 351
§ 17. Modification of its manifestation 351
§ 18. Instances of absence of imagination.—Claude, Gaspar Poussin 252
§ 19. Its presence.—Salvator, Nicolo Poussin, Titian, Tintoret. 352
§ 20. And Turner 353

PAGE
§ 21. The due function of Associative imagination with respect to nature 354
§ 22. The sign of imaginative work is its appearance of absolute truth 355

CHAPTER III.—OF IMAGINATION PENETRATIVE.

§ 1. Imagination penetrative is concerned not with the combining but apprehending of things 356
§ 2. Milton's and Dante's description of flame 357
§ 3. The imagination seizes always by the innermost point .. 358
§ 4. It acts intuitively and without reasoning 358
§ 5. Signs of it in language 359
§ 6. Absence of imagination, how shown 359
§ 7. Distinction between imagination and fancy 360
§ 8. Fancy how involved with imagination 362
§ 9. Fancy is never serious 363
§ 10. Want of seriousness the bar to high art at the present time 363
§ 11. Imagination is quiet; fancy, restless 364
§ 12. The detailing operation of fancy 364
§ 13. And suggestive, of the imagination 365
§ 14. This suggestiveness how opposed to vacancy 366
§ 15. Imagination addresses itself to imagination 367
Instances from the works of Tintoret 368
§ 16. The entombment 368
§ 17. The Annunciation 369
§ 18. The Baptism of Christ. Its treatment by various painters 370
§ 19. By Tintoret 371
§ 20. The Crucifixion 372
§ 21. The Massacre of Innocents 374
§ 22. Various works in the Scuola di San Rocco 375
§ 23. The Last Judgment. How treated by various painters. 376
§ 24. By Tintoret 377
§ 25. The Imaginative verity, how distinguished from realism. 378
§ 26. The imagination how manifested in sculpture 379
§ 27. Bandinelli, Canova, Mino da Fiesole 379
§ 28. Michael Angelo 380
§ 29. Recapitulation. The perfect function of the imagination is the intuitive perception of ultimate truth 383
§ 30. Imagination, how vulgarly understood 385
§ 31. How its cultivation is dependent on the moral feelings .. 386
§ 32. On independence of mind 386
§ 33. And on habitual reference to nature 386

CHAPTER IV.—Of Imagination Contemplative.

PAGE
§ 1. Imagination contemplative is not part of the essence, but only a habit or mode of the faculty 387
§ 2. The ambiguity of conception......................... 388
§ 3. Is not in itself capable of adding to the charm of fair things.................. 388
§ 4. But gives to the imagination its regardant power over them... 389
§ 5. The third office of fancy distinguished from imagination contemplative.................................. 390
§ 6. Various instances 393
§ 7. Morbid or nervous fancy............................. 396
§ 8. The action of contemplative imagination is not to be expressed by art.............................. 396
§ 9. Except under narrow limits.—1st. Abstract rendering of form without color............................. 397
§ 10. Of color without form... 398
§ 11. Or of both without texture..................... 398
§ 12. Abstraction or typical representation of animal form ... 399
§ 13. Either when it is symbolically used.................. 400
§ 14. Or in architectural decoration........................ 401
§ 15. Exception in delicate and superimposed ornament...... 402
§ 16. Abstraction necessary from imperfection of materials... 402
§ 17. Abstractions of things capable of varied accident are not imaginative 403
§ 18. Yet sometimes valuable............................... 403
§ 19. Exaggeration. Its laws and limits. First, in scale of representation 404
§ 20. Secondly, of things capable of variety of scale......... 405
§ 21. Thirdly, necessary in expression of characteristic features on diminished scale........ 406
§ 22. Recapitulation.. 407

CHAPTER V.—Of the Superhuman Ideal.

§ 1. The subject is not to be here treated in detail.......... 407
§ 2. The conceivable modes of manifestation of Spiritual Beings are four....................................... 408
§ 3. And these are in or through creature forms familiar to us 408
§ 4. Supernatural character may be impressed on these either by phenomena inconsistent with their common nature (compare Chap. iv. § 16) 409
§ 5. Or by inherent Dignity................................. 409
§ 6. 1st. Of the expression of inspiration 409

PAGE
§ 7. No representation of that which is more than creature is possible.. 410
§ 8. Supernatural character expressed by modification of accessories 412
§ 9. Landscape of the religious painters. Its character is eminently symmetrical.. 412
§ 10. Landscape of Benozzo Gozzoli.......................... 413
§ 11. Landscape of Perugino and Raffaelle...... 414
§ 12. Such Landscape is not to be imitated 414
§ 13. Color, and Decoration. Their use in representations of the Supernatural 415
§ 14. Decoration so used must be generic.................... 416
§ 15. And color pure.. 416
§ 16. Ideal form of the body itself, of what variety susceptible. 417
§ 17. Anatomical development how far admissible 417
§ 18. Symmetry. How valuable............................ 418
§ 19. The influence of Greek art, how dangerous............ 418
§ 20. Its scope, how limited.................. 419
§ 21. Conclusion 420
Addenda.. 421

MODERN PAINTERS.

PART II.—*(Continued.)*

OF TRUTH.

SECTION IV.

OF TRUTH OF EARTH.

CHAPTER I.

OF GENERAL STRUCTURE.

§ 1. First laws of the organization of the earth, and their importance in art.

By truth of earth, we mean the faithful representation of the facts and forms of the bare ground, considered as entirely divested of vegetation, through whatever disguise, or under whatever modification the clothing of the landscape may occasion. Ground is to the landscape painter what the naked human body is to the historical. The growth of vegetation, the action of water, and even of clouds upon it and around it, are so far subject and subordinate to its forms, as the folds of the dress and the fall of the hair are to the modulation of the animal anatomy. Nor is this anatomy always so concealed, but in all sublime compositions, whether of nature or art, it must be seen in its naked purity. The laws of the organization of the earth are distinct and fixed as those of the animal frame, simpler and broader, but equally authoritative and inviolable. Their results may be arrived at without knowledge of the interior mechanism; but for that very reason ignorance of them is the more disgraceful, and violation of them more unpardonable. They are in the landscape the foundation of all other truths—the most necessary, therefore, even if they were not in themselves attractive; but they are as beautiful as they are essential, and every abandonment of them by the artist must end in deformity as it begins in falsehood.

§ 2. The slight attention ordinarily paid to them. Their careful study by modern artists.

That such abandonment is constant and total in the works of the old masters, has escaped detection, only because of persons generally cognizant of art, few have spent time enough in hill countries to perceive the certainty of the laws of hill anatomy; and because few, even of those who possess such opportunities, ever think of the common earth beneath their feet, as anything possessing specific form, or governed by steadfast principles. That such abandonment should have taken place cannot be surprising, after what we have seen of their fidelity to skies. Those artists who, day after day, could so falsely represent what was forever before their eyes, when it was to be one of the most important and attractive parts of their picture, can scarcely be expected to give with truth what they could see only partially and at intervals, and what was only to be in their picture a blue line in the horizon, or a bright spot under the feet of their figures.

That such should be all the space allotted by the old landscape painters to the most magnificent phenomena of nature; that the only traces of those Apennines, which in Claude's walks along the brow of the Pincian, forever bounded his horizon with their azure wall, should, in his pictures, be a cold white outline in the extreme of his tame distance; and that Salvator's sojourns among their fastnesses should only have taught him to shelter his banditti with such paltry morsels of crag as an Alpine stream would toss down before it like a foam-globe; though it may indeed excite our surprise, will, perhaps, when we have seen how these slight passages are executed, be rather a subject of congratulation than of regret. It might, indeed, have shortened our labor in the investigation of mountain truth, had not modern artists been so vast, comprehensive, and multitudinous in their mountain drawings, as to compel us, in order to form the slightest estimate of their knowledge, to enter into some examination of every variety of hill scenery. We shall first gain some general notion of the broad organization of large masses, and then take those masses to pieces, until we come down to the crumbling soil of the foreground.

§ 3. General structure of the earth. The hills are its action, the plains its rest.

Mountains are, to the rest of the body of the earth, what violent muscular action is to the body of man. The muscles and tendons of its anatomy are, in the mountain, brought out with fierce and convulsive energy, full of expression, passion, and strength; the plains and the lower hills are the repose and the effortless motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty, yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. This, then, is the first grand principle of the truth of the earth. The spirit of the hills is action; that of the lowlands, repose; and between these there is to be found every variety of motion and of rest; from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan hands to Heaven, saying, "I live forever!"

§ 4. Mountains come out from underneath the plains, and are their support.

But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature, that while the exerted limb marks its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath. Mountains are the bones of the earth, their highest peaks are invariably those parts of its anatomy which in the plains lie buried under five and twenty thousand feet of solid thickness of superincumbent soil, and which spring up in the mountain ranges in vast pyramids or wedges, flinging their garment of earth away from them on each side. The masses of the lower hills are laid over and against their sides, like the masses of lateral masonry against the skeleton arch of an unfinished bridge, except that they slope up to and lean against the central ridge : and, finally, upon the slopes of these lower hills are strewed the level beds of sprinkled gravel, sand, and clay, which form the extent of the champaign. Here then is another grand principle of the truth of earth, that the mountains must come from under all, and be the support of all ; and that everything also must be laid in their arms, heap above heap, the plains being the uppermost. Opposed to this truth is every appearance of the hills being laid upon the plains, or built upon them. Nor is this a truth only of the earth on a large scale, for every minor rock (in position) comes out from the soil about it as an island out of the sea, lifting the earth near it like waves beating on its sides.

§ 5. Structure of the plains themselves. Their perfect level, when deposited by quiet water.

Such being the structure of the framework of the earth, it is next to be remembered that all soil whatsoever, wherever it is accumulated in greater quantity than is sufficient to nourish the moss of the wallflower, has been so, either by the direct transporting agency of water, or under the guiding influence and power of water. All plains capable of cultivation are deposits from some kind of water—some from swift and tremendous currents, leaving their soil in sweeping banks and furrowed ridges—others, and this is in mountain districts almost invariably the case, by slow deposit from a quiet lake in the mountain hollow, which has been gradually filled by the soil carried into it by streams, which soil is of course finally left spread at the exact level of the surface of the former lake, as level as the quiet water itself. Hence we constantly meet with plains in hill districts, which fill the hollows of the hills with as perfect and faultless a level as water, and out of which the steep rocks rise at the edge with as little previous disturbance, or indication of their forms beneath, as they do from the margin of a quiet lake. Every delta—and there is one at the head of every lake in every hill-district—supplies an instance of this. The rocks at Altorf plunge beneath the plain, which the lake has left, at as sharp an angle as they do into the lake itself beside the chapel of Tell. The plain of the Arve, at Sallenche, is terminated so sharply by the hills to the south-east, that I have seen a man sleeping with his back supported against the mountain, and his legs stretched on the plain; the slope which supported his back rising 5,000 feet above him, and the couch of his legs stretched for five miles before him. In distant effect these champaigns lie like deep, blue, undisturbed water, while the mighty hills around them burst out from beneath, raging and tossing like a tumultuous sea. The valleys of Meyringen, Interlachen, Altorf, Sallenche, St. Jean de Maurienne; the great plain of Lombardy itself, as seen from Milan or Padua, under the Alps, the Euganeans, and the Apennines; and the Campo Felice under Vesuvius, are a few, out of the thousand instances, which must occur at once to the mind of every traveller.

§ 6. Illustrated by Turner's Marengo.

Let the reader now open Rogers's Italy, at the seventeenth page, and look at the vignette which heads it of the battle of Marengo. It needs no comment. It cannot but carry with it, after what has been said, the instant conviction that Turner is as much of a geologist as he is of a painter. It is a summary of all we have been saying, and a summary so distinct and clear, that without any such explanation it must have forced upon the mind the impression of such facts—of the plunging of the hills underneath the plain—of the perfect level and repose of this latter laid in their arms, and of the tumultuous action of the emergent summits.

§ 7. General divisions of formation resulting from this arrangement. Plan of investigation.

We find, according to this its internal structure, which, I believe, with the assistance of Turner, can scarcely now be misunderstood, that the earth may be considered as divided into three great classes of formation, which geology has already named for us. Primary—the rocks, which, though in position lower than all others, rise to form the central peaks, or interior nuclei of all mountain ranges. Secondary—the rocks which are laid in beds above these, and which form the greater proportion of all hill scenery. Tertiary—the light beds of sand, gravel, and clay, which are strewed upon the surface of all, forming plains and habitable territory for man. We shall find it convenient, in examining the truth of art, to adopt, with a little modification, the geological arrangement, considering first, the formation and character of the highest or central peaks; then the general structure of the lower mountains, including in this division those composed of the various slates which a geologist would call primary; and, lastly, the minutiæ and most delicate characters of the beds of these hills, when they are so near as to become foreground objects, and the structure of the common soil which usually forms the greater space of an artist's foreground. Hence our task will arrange itself into three divisions—the investigation of the central mountains, of the interior mountains, and of the foreground.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE CENTRAL MOUNTAINS.

§ 1. Similar character of the central peaks in all parts of the world.

It does not always follow, because a mountain is the highest of its group, that it is in reality one of the central range. The Jungfrau is only surpassed in elevation, in the chain of which it is a member, by the Schreckhorn and Finster-Aarhorn; but it is entirely a secondary mountain. But the central peaks are usually the highest, and may be considered as the chief components of all mountain scenery in the snowy regions. Being composed of the same rocks in all countries, their external character is the same everywhere. Its chief essential points are the following.

§ 2. Their arrangements in pyramids or wedges, divided by vertical fissures.

Their summits are almost invariably either pyramids or wedges. Domes may be formed by superincumbent snow, or appear to be formed by the continuous outline of a sharp ridge seen transversely, with its precipice to the spectator; but wherever a rock appears, the uppermost termination of that rock will be a steep edgy ridge, or a sharp point, very rarely presenting even a gentle slope on any of its sides, but usually inaccessible unless encumbered with snow.

These pyramids and wedges split vertically, or nearly so, giving smooth faces of rock, either perpendicular or very steeply inclined, which appear to be laid against the central wedge or peak, like planks upright against a wall. The surfaces of these show close parallelism ; their fissures are vertical, and cut them smoothly, like the edges of shaped planks. Often groups of these planks, if I may so call them, rise higher than those between them and the central ridge, forming detached ridges inclining towards the central one. The planks are cut transversely, sometimes by graceful curvilinear fissures ; sometimes by straight fissures, which are commonly parallel to the slope of one of the sides of the peak, while the main direction of the planks or leaves is parallel to that of its other side, or points directly to its summit. But the *universal* law of fracture is—first, that it is clean and sharp, having a perfectly smooth surface, and a perfectly sharp edge to all the fissures ; secondly, that every fissure is steeply inclined, and that a horizontal line, or one approaching to it, is an impossibility, except in some turn of a curve.

Hence, however the light may fall, these peaks are seen marked with sharp and defined shadows, indicating the square edges of the planks of which they are made up, which shadows sometimes are vertical, pointing to the summit ; but are oftener parallel to one of the sides of the peak, and intersected by a second series, parallel to the other side. Where there has been much disintegration, the peak is often surrounded with groups of lower ridges or peaks, like the leaves of an artichoke or a rose, all evidently part and parcel of the great peak ; but falling back from it, as if it were a budding flower, expanding its leaves one by one.

§ 3. Causing groups of rock resembling an artichoke or rose.

§ 4. The faithful statement of these facts by Turner in his Alps at Daybreak.

Now, if I were giving a lecture on geology, and were searching for some means of giving the most faithful idea possible of the external appearance caused by this structure of the pri·

mary hills, I should throw my geological outlines aside, and take up Turner's vignette of the Alps at Daybreak. After what has been said, a single glance at it will be enough. Observe the exquisite decision with which the edge of the uppermost plank of the great peak is indicated by its clear dark side and sharp shadow; then the rise of the second low ridge on its side, only to descend again precisely in the same line; the two fissures of this peak, one pointing to its summit, the other rigidly parallel to the great slope which descends towards the sun; then the sharp white *aiguille* on the right, with the great fissure from its summit, rigidly and severely square, as marked below, where another edge of rock is laid upon it. But this is not all; the black rock in the foreground is equally a member of the mass, its chief slope parallel with that of the mountain, and all its fissures and lines inclined in the same direction; and, to complete the mass of evidence more forcibly still, we have the dark mass on the left articulated with absolute right lines, as parallel as if they had been drawn with a ruler, indicating the tops of two of these huge plates or planks, pointing, with the universal tendency, to the great ridge, and intersected by fissures parallel to it. Throughout the extent of mountain, not one horizontal line, nor an approach to it, is discernible. This cannot be chance—it cannot be composition—it may not be beautiful—perhaps nature is very wrong to be so parallel, and very disagreeable in being so straight;—but this *is* nature, whether we admire it or not.

§ 5. Vignette of the Andes and others.

In the vignette illustration to Jacqueline, we have another series of peaks, whose structure is less developed, owing to their distance, but equally clear and faithful in all points, as far as it is given. But the vignette of Aosta, in the Italy, is perhaps more striking than any that could be named for its rendering of the perfect parallelism of the lower and smaller peaks with the great lines of the mass they compose; and that of the Andes, the second in Campbell, for its indication of the multitudes of the vertical and plank-like beds arranged almost like the leaves of a flower. This last especially, one of the very noblest, most faithful, most scientific statements of mountain form which even Turner has ever made, can leave little more to be said or doubted.

§ 6. Necessary distance, and consequent aerial effect on all such mountains.

Now, whenever these vast peaks, rising from 12,000 to 24,000 feet above the sea, form part of anything like a landscape, that is to say, whenever the spectator beholds them from the region of vegetation, or even from any distance at which it is possible to get something like a view of their whole mass, they must be at so great a distance from him as to become aerial and faint in all their details. Their summits, and all those higher masses of whose character we have been speaking, can by no possibility be nearer to him than twelve or fifteen miles; to approach them nearer he must climb—must leave the region of vegetation, and must confine his view to a part, and that a very limited one, of the mountain he is ascending. Whenever, therefore, these mountains are seen over anything like vegetation, or are seen in mass, they *must* be in the far distance. Most artists would treat an horizon fifteen miles off very much as if it were mere air; and though the greater clearness of the upper air permits the high summits to be seen with extraordinary distinctness, yet they never can by any possibility have dark or deep shadows, or intense dark relief against a light. Clear they may be, but faint they must be, and their great and prevailing characteristic, as distinguished from other mountains, is want of apparent solidity. They rise in the morning light rather like sharp shades, cast up into the sky, than solid earth. Their lights are pure, roseate, and cloud-like—their shadows transparent, pale, and opalescent, and often indistinguishable from the air around them, so that the mountain-top is seen in the heaven only by its flakes of motionless fire.

§ 7. Total want of any rendering of their phenomena in ancient art.

Now, let me once more ask, though I am sufficiently tired of asking, what record have we of anything like this in the works of the old masters? There is no vestige in any existing picture of the slightest effort to represent the high hill ranges; and as for such drawing of their forms as we have found in Turner, we might as well look for them among the Chinese

Very possibly it may be all quite right,—very probably these men showed the most cultivated taste, the most unerring judgment, in filling their pictures with mole-hills and sand-heaps. Very probably the withered and poisonous banks of Avernus, and the sand and cinders of the Campagna, are much more sublime things than the Alps; but still what limited truth it is, if truth it be, when through the last fifty pages we have been pointing out fact after fact, scene after scene, in clouds and hills, (and not individual facts nor scenes, but great and important classes of them,) and still we have nothing to say when we come to the old masters; but, "they are not here." Yet this is what we hear so constantly called painting "general" nature.

§ 8. Character of the representations of Alps in the distances of Claude.

Although, however, there is no vestige among the old masters of any effort to represent the attributes of the higher mountains seen in comparative proximity, we are not altogether left without evidence of their having thought of them as sources of light in the extreme distance, as for example, in that of the reputed Claude in our National Gallery, called the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. I have not the slightest doubt of its being a most execrable copy; for there is not one touch nor line of even decent painting in the whole picture; but as connoisseurs have considered it a Claude, as it has been put in our Gallery for a Claude, and as people admire it every day for a Claude, I may at least presume it has those qualities of Claude in it which are wont to excite the public admiration, though it possesses none of those which sometimes give him claim to it; and I have so reasoned, and shall continue to reason upon it, especially with respect to facts of form, which cannot have been much altered by the copyist. In the distance of that picture (as well as in that of the Sinon before Priam, which I have little doubt is at least partially original, and whose central group of trees is a very noble piece of painting) is something white, which I believe must be intended for a snowy mountain, because I do not see that it can well be intended for anything else. Now no mountain of

§ 9. Their total want of magnitude and aerial distance.

elevation sufficient to be so sheeted with perpetual snow, can by any possibility sink so low on the horizon as this something of Claude's, unless it be at a distance of from fifty to seventy miles. At such distances, though the outline is invariably sharp and edgy to an excess, yet all the circumstances of aerial perspective, faintness of shadow, and isolation of light, which I have described as characteristic of the Alps fifteen miles off, take place, of course, in a threefold degree; the mountains rise from the horizon like transparent films, only distinguishable from mist by their excessively keen edges, and their brilliant flashes of sudden light; they are as unsubstantial as the air itself, and impress their enormous size by means of this aerialness, in a far greater degree at these vast distances, than even when towering above the spectator's head. Now, I ask of the candid observer, if there be the smallest vestige of an effort to attain—if there be the most miserable, the most contemptible shadow of attainment of such an effect by Claude? Does that white thing on the horizon look seventy miles off? Is it faint, or fading, or to be looked for by the eye before it can be found out? Does it look high? does it look large? does it look impressive? You cannot but feel that there is not a vestige of any kind or species of truth in that horizon; and that, however artistical it may be, as giving brilliancy to the distance, (though, as far as I have any feeling in the matter, it only gives coldness,) it is, in the very branch of art on which Claude's reputation chiefly rests, aerial perspective, hurling defiance to nature in her very teeth.

But there are worse failures yet in this unlucky distance. Aerial perspective is not a matter of paramount importance, because nature infringes its laws herself, and boldly too, though never in a case like this before us; but there are some laws which nature never violates—her laws of form. No mountain was ever raised to the level of perpetual snow, without an infinite multiplicity of form. Its foundation is built of a hundred minor mountains, and, from these, great buttresses run in converging ridges to the central peak. There is no exception to this rule; no

§ 10. And violation of specific form.

mountain 15,000 feet high is ever raised without such preparation and variety of outwork. Consequently, in distant effect, when chains of such peaks are visible at once, the multiplicity of form is absolutely oceanic ; and though it is possible in near scenes to find vast and simple masses composed of lines which run unbroken for a thousand feet, or more, it is physically impossible when these masses are thrown seventy miles back, to have simple outlines, for then these large features become mere jags, and hillocks, and are heaped and huddled together with endless confusion. To get a simple form, seventy miles away, mountain lines would be required unbroken for leagues ; and this, I repeat, is physically impossible. Hence these mountains of Claude, having no indication of the steep vertical summits which we have shown to be the characteristic of the central ridges, having soft edges instead of decisive ones, simple forms (one line to the plain on each side) instead of varied and broken ones, and being painted with a crude raw white, having no transparency, nor filminess, nor air in it, instead of rising in the opalescent mystery which invariably characterizes the distant snows, have the forms and the colors of heaps of chalk in a lime-kiln, not of Alps. They are destitute of energy, of height, of distance, of splendor, and of variety, and are the work of a man, whether Claude or not, who had neither feeling for nature, nor knowledge of art.

§ 11. Even in his best works.

I should not, however, insist upon the faults of this picture, believing it to be a copy, if I had ever seen, even in his most genuine works, an extreme distance of Claude with any of the essential characters of nature. But although in his better pictures we have always beautiful drawing of the *air*, which in the copy before us is entirely wanting, the real features of the extreme mountain distance are equally neglected or maligned in all. There is, indeed, air between us and it ; but ten miles, not seventy miles of space. Let us observe a little more closely the practice of nature in such cases.

The multiplicity of form which I have shown to be necessary in the outline, is not less felt in the body of the mass.

For, in all extensive hill ranges, there are five or six lateral chains separated by deep valleys, which rise between the spectator and the central ridge, showing their tops one over another, wave beyond wave, until the eye is carried back to the faintest and highest forms of the principal chain. These successive ridges, and I speak now not merely of the Alps, but of mountains generally, even as low as 3000 feet above the sea, show themselves in extreme distance merely as vertical shades, with very sharp outlines, detached from one another by greater intensity, according to their nearness. It is with the utmost difficulty that the eye can discern any solidity or roundness in them ; the lights and shades of solid form are both equally lost in the blue of the atmosphere, and the mountain tells only as a flat, sharp-edged film, of which multitudes intersect and overtop one another, separated by the greater faintness of the retiring masses. This is the most simple and easily imitated arrangement possible, and yet, both in nature and art, it expresses distance and size in a way otherwise quite unattainable. For thus, the whole mass of one mountain being of one shade only, the smallest possible difference in shade will serve completely to detach it from another, and thus ten or twelve distances may be made evident, when the darkest and nearest is an aerial gray as faint as the sky ; and the beauty of such arrangements carried out as nature carries them, to their highest degree, is, perhaps, the most striking feature connected with hill scenery : you will never, by any chance, perceive in extreme distance, anything like solid form or projection of the hills. Each is a dead, flat, perpendicular film or shade, with a sharp edge darkest at the summit, and lost as it descends, and about equally dark whether turned towards the light or from it ; and of these successive films of mountain you will probably have half a dozen, one behind another, all showing with perfect clearness their every chasm and peak in the outline, and not one of them showing the slightest vestige of solidity, but on the contrary, looking so thoroughly transparent, that if it so happens, as I have seen frequently, that a

§ 12. Farther illustration of the distant character of mountain chains.

§ 13. Their excessive appearance of transparency.

conical near hill meets with its summit the separation of two distant ones, so that the right-hand slope of the nearer hill forms an apparent continuation of the right-hand slope of the left-hand farther hill, and *vice versa*, it is impossible to get rid of the impression that one of the more distant peaks is seen *through* the other.

§ 14. Illustrated from the works of Turner and Stanfield. The Borromean Islands of the latter.

I may point out in illustration of these facts, the engravings of two drawings of precisely the same chain of distant hills,—Stanfield's Borromean Islands, with the St. Gothard in the distance, and Turner's Arona, also with the St. Gothard in the distance. Far be it from me to indicate the former of these plates as in any way exemplifying the power of Stanfield, or affecting his reputation ; it is an unlucky drawing, murdered by the engraver, and as far from being characteristic of Stanfield as it is from being like nature, but it is just what I want, to illustrate the particular error of which I speak ; and I prefer showing this error where it accidentally exists in the works of a really great artist, standing there alone, to point it out where it is confused with other faults and falsehoods in the works of inferior hands. The former of these plates is an example of everything which a hill distance is not, and the latter of everything which it is. In the former, we have the mountains covered with patchy lights, which being of equal intensity whether near or distant, confuse all the distances together ; while the eye, perceiving that the light falls so as to give details of solid form, yet finding nothing but insipid and formless spaces displayed by it, is compelled to suppose that the whole body of the hill is equally monotonous and devoid of character ; and the effect upon it is not one whit more impressive and agreeable than might be received from a group of sand-heaps, washed into uniformity by recent rain.

§ 15. Turner's Arona.

Compare with this the distance of Turner in Arona. It is totally impossible here to say which way the light falls on the distant hills, except by the slightly increased decision of their edges turned towards it, but the greatest attention is paid to get these edges decisive, yet full of gradation, and perfectly true in character of form. All the rest of the mountain is then indistinguishable haze, and by the bringing of these edges more and more decisively over one another, Turner has given us between the right-hand side of the picture and the snow, fifteen distinct distances, yet every one of these distances in itself palpitating, changeful, and suggesting subdivision into countless multitude. Something of this is traceable even in the engraving, and all the essential characters are perfectly well marked. I think even the least experienced eye can scarcely but feel the truth of this distance as compared with Stanfield's. In the latter, the eye gets something of the form, and therefore wonders it sees no more ; the impression on it, therefore, is of hills within distinctly visible distance, indiscernible through want of light or dim atmosphere ; and the effect is, of course, smallness of space, with obscurity of light and thickness of air. In Turner's the eye gets nothing of the substance, and wonders it sees so much of the outline ; the impression is, therefore, of mountains too far off to be ever distinctly seen, rendered clear by brilliancy of light and purity of atmosphere ; and the effect, consequently, vastness of space, with intensity of light and crystalline transparency of air.

§ 16. Extreme distance of large objects always characterized by very sharp outline.

These truths are invariably given in every one of Turner's distances, that is to say, we have always in them two principal facts forced on our notice ; transparency, or filminess of mass, and excessive sharpness of edge. And I wish particularly to insist upon this sharpness of edge, because it is not a casual or changeful habit of nature ; it is the unfailing characteristic of all very great distances. It is quite a mistake to suppose that slurred or melting lines are characteristic of distant *large* objects ; they may be so, as before observed, (Sec. II. Chap. IV. § 4,) when the focus of the eye is not adapted to them ; but, when the eye is really directed to the distance, melting lines are characteristic only of thick mist and vapor between us and the object, not of the removal of the object. If a thing has character upon its outline, as a tree for instance, or a mossy stone, the farther it is removed from us, the sharper the outline of the whole mass will become, though in doing so, the particular details which make up the character will become confused in the manner described in the same chapter. A tree fifty yards from us, taken as a mass, has a soft outline, because the leaves and interstices have some effect on the eye. But put it ten miles off against the sky, and its outline will be so sharp that you cannot tell it from a rock. There are three trees on the Mont Saleve, about five miles from Geneva, which from the city, as they stand on the ridge of the hill, are seen defined against the sky. The keenest eye in the world could not tell them from stones. So in a mountain five or six miles off, bushes, and heather, and roughnesses of knotty ground and rock, have still some effect on the eye, and by becoming confused and mingled as before described, soften the outline. But let the mountain be thirty miles off, and its edge will be as sharp as a knife. Let it, as in the case of the Alps, be seventy or eighty miles off, and though it has become so faint that the morning mist is not so transparent, its outline will be beyond all imitation for excessive sharpness. Thus, then, the character of extreme distance is always excessive keenness of edge. If you soften your outline, you either put mist between you and the object, and in doing so diminish your distance, for it is impossible you should see so far through mist as through clear air; or, if you keep an impression of clear air, you bring the object close to the observer, diminish its size in proportion, and if the aerial colors, excessive blues, etc., be retained, represent an impossibility.

§ 17. Want of this decision in Claude.

Take Claude's distance (in No. 244, Dulwich Gallery,) * on the right of the picture. It is as pure blue as ever came from the pallet, laid on thick; you cannot see through it, there is not the slightest vestige of transparency or filminess about it, and its edge is soft and blunt. Hence, if it be meant for near hills, the blue is impossible, and the want of details impossible, in the clear

---

* One of the most genuine Claudes I know.

atmosphere indicated through the whole picture. If it be meant for extreme distance, the blunt edge is impossible, and the opacity is impossible. I do not know a single distance of the Italian school to which the same observation is not entirely applicable, except, perhaps, one or two of Nicholas Poussin's. They always involve, under any supposition whatsoever, at least two impossibilities.

§ 18. The perpetual rendering of it by Turner.

I need scarcely mention in particular any more of the works of Turner, because there is not one of his mountain distances in which these facts are not fully exemplified. Look at the last vignette—the Farewell, in Rogers's Italy ; observe the excessive sharpness of all the edges, almost amounting to lines, in the distance, while there is scarcely one decisive edge in the foreground. Look at the hills of the distance in the Dunstaffnage, Glencoe, and Loch Achray, (illustrations to Scott,) in the latter of which the left-hand side of the Benvenue is actually marked with a dark line. In fact, Turner's usual mode of executing these passages is perfectly evident in all his drawings ; it is not often that we meet with a very broad dash of wet color in his finished works, but in these distances, as we before saw of his shadows, all the effect has been evidently given by a dash of very moist pale color, probably turning the paper upside down, so that a very firm edge may be left at the top of the mountain as the color dries. And in the Battle of Marengo we find the principle carried so far as to give nothing more than actual outline for the representation of the extreme distance, while all the other hills in the picture are distinctly darkest at the edge. This plate, though coarsely executed, is yet one of the noblest illustrations of mountain character and magnitude existing.

§ 19. Effects of snow, how imperfectly studied.

Such, then, are the chief characteristics of the highest peaks and extreme distances of all hills, as far as the forms of the rocks themselves, and the aerial appearances especially belonging to them, are alone concerned. There is, however, yet another point to be considered—the modification of their form caused by incumbent snow.

Pictures of winter scenery are nearly as common as moonlights, and are usually executed by the same order of artists, that is to say, the most incapable ; it being remarkably easy to represent the moon as a white wafer on a black ground, or to scratch out white branches on a cloudy sky. Nevertheless, among Flemish paintings several valuable representations of winter are to be found, and some clever pieces of effect among the moderns, as Hunt's, for instance, and De Wint's. But all such efforts end in effect alone, nor have I ever in any single instance seen a snow *wreath*, I do not say thoroughly, but even decently, drawn.

In the range of inorganic nature, I doubt if any object can be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh, deep snow-drift, seen under warm light.* Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness, its surface and transparency alike exquisite, its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish, the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly color, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light. No mortal hand can approach the majesty or loveliness of it, yet it is possible by care and skill at least to suggest the preciousness of its forms and intimate the nature of its light and shade ; but this has never been attempted ; it could not be done except by artists of a rank exceedingly high, and there is something about the feeling of snow in ordinary scenery which such men do not like. But when the same qualities are exhibited on a magnificent Alpine scale and in a position where they interfere with no feeling of life, I see not why they should be neglected, as they have hitherto been, unless that the difficulty of reconciling the brilliancy of snow with a picturesque light and shade, is so great that most good artists disguise or avoid the greater part of upper Alpine scenery, and hint at the glacier so slightly, that they do not feel the necessity of careful study of its forms. Habits of exaggeration increase the evil : I have seen a sketch from nature, by one of the most able of our landscape painters, in which a cloud had been mistaken for a snowy summit, and the hint thus taken exaggerated, as was likely, into an enormous mass of impossible height, and unintelligent form, when the mountain itself, for which the cloud had been mistaken, though subtending an angle of about eighteen or twenty degrees, instead of the fifty attributed to it, was of a form so exquisite that it might have been a profitable lesson truly studied to Phidias. Nothing but failure can result from such methods of sketching, nor have I ever seen a single instance of an earnest study of snowy mountains by any one. Hence, wherever they are introduced, their drawing is utterly unintelligent, the forms being those of white rocks, or of rocks lightly powdered with snow, showing sufficiently that not only the painters have never studied the mountain carefully from below, but that they have never climbed into the snowy region. Harding's rendering of the high Alps (*vide* the engraving of Chamonix, and of the Wengern Alp, in the illustrations to Byron) is best; but even he shows no perception of the real anatomy. Stanfield paints only white rocks instead of snow. Turner invariably avoids the difficulty, though he has shown himself capable of grappling with it in the ice of the Liber Studiorum, (Mer de Glace,) which is very cold and slippery and very like ice; but of the crusts and wreaths of the higher snow he has taken no cognizance. Even the vignettes to Rogers's Poems fail in this respect. It would be vain to attempt in this place to give any detailed account of the phenomena of the upper snows; but it may be well to note those general principles which every artist ought to keep in mind when he has to paint an Alp.

---

* Compare Part III. Sect. I. Chap. 9, § 5.

§ 20. General principles of its forms on the Alps.

Snow is modified by the under forms of the hill in some sort, as dress is by the anatomy of the human frame. And as no dress can be well laid on without conceiving the body beneath, so no Alp can be drawn unless its under form is conceived first, and its snow laid on afterwards.

Every high Alp has as much snow upon it as it can hold or carry. It is not, observe, a mere coating of snow of given depth throughout, but it is snow loaded on until the rocks can hold no more. The surplus does not fall in the winter, because, fastened by continual frost, the quantity of snow which an Alp can carry is greater than each single winter can bestow ; it falls in the first mild days of spring in enormous avalanches. Afterwards the melting continues, gradually removing from all the steep rocks the small quantity of snow which was all they could hold, and leaving them black and bare among the accumulated fields of unknown depth, which occupy the capacious valleys and less inclined superfices of the mountain.

Hence it follows that the deepest snow does not take nor indicate the actual forms of the rocks on which it lies, but it hangs from peak to peak in unbroken and sweeping festoons, or covers whole groups of peaks, which afford it sufficient hold, with vast and unbroken domes : these festoons and domes being guided in their curves, and modified in size, by the violence and prevalent direction of the winter winds.

We have, therefore, every variety of indication of the under mountain form ; first, the mere coating, which is soon to be withdrawn, and which shows as a mere sprinkling or powdering after a storm on the higher peaks ; then the shallow incrustation on the steep sides glazed by the running down of its frequent meltings, frozen again in the night ; then the deep snow more or less cramped or modified by sudden eminences of emergent rock, or hanging in fractured festoons and huge blue irregular cliffs on the mountain flanks, and over the edges and summits of their precipices in nodding drifts, far overhanging, like a cornice, (perilous things to approach the edge of from above ;) finally, the pure accumulation of overwhelming depth, smooth, sweeping, and almost cleftless, and modified only by its lines of drifting. Countless phenomena of exquisite beauty belong to each of these conditions, not to speak of the transition of the snow into ice at lower levels ; but all on which I shall at present insist is that the artist should not think of his Alp merely as a white mountain, but conceive it as a group of peaks loaded with an accumulation of snow, and that especially he should avail himself of the exquisite curvatures, never failing, by which the snow unites and opposes the harsh and broken lines of the rock. I shall enter into farther detail on this subject hereafter ; at present it is useless to do so, as I have no examples to refer to, either in ancient or modern art. No statement of these facts has hitherto been made, nor any evidence given even of their observation, except by the most inferior painters.*

§ 21. Average paintings of Switzerland. Its real spirit has scarcely yet been caught.

Various works in green and white appear from time to time on the walls of the Academy, *like* the Alps indeed, but so frightfully like, that we shudder and sicken at the sight of them, as we do when our best friend shows us into his dining-room, to see a portrait of himself, which "everybody thinks very like." We should be glad to see fewer of these, for Switzerland is quite beyond the power of any but first-rate men, and is exceedingly bad practice for a rising artist ; but, let us express a hope that Alpine scenery will not continue to be neglected as it has been, by those who alone are capable of treating it. We love Italy, but we have had rather a surfeit of it lately;—too many peaked caps and flat-headed pines. We should be very grateful to Harding and Stanfield if they would refresh us a little among the snow, and give us, what we believe them to be capable of giving us, a faithful expression of Alpine ideal. We are well aware of the pain inflicted on an artist's mind by the preponderance of black, and white, and green, over more available colors ; but there is nevertheless in generic Alpine scenery, a fountain of feeling yet unopened—a chord of harmony yet untouched by art. It will be struck by the first man who can separate what is national, in Switzerland, from what is ideal. We do not want chalets and three-legged stools, cow-bells and buttermilk. We want the pure and holy hills, treated as a link between heaven and earth.

---

* I hear of some study of Alpine scenery among the professors at Geneva ; but all foreign landscape that I have ever met with has been so utterly ignorant that I hope for nothing except from our own painters.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE INFERIOR MOUNTAINS.

§ 1. The inferior mountains are distinguished from the central by being divided into beds.

We have next to investigate the character of those intermediate masses which constitute the greater part of all hill scenery, forming the outworks of the high ranges, and being almost the sole constituents of such lower groups as those of Cumberland, Scotland, or South Italy.

All mountains whatever, not composed of the granite or gneiss rocks described in the preceding chapter, nor volcanic, (these latter being comparatively rare,) are composed of *beds*, not of homogeneous, heaped materials, but of accumulated layers, whether of rock or soil. It may be slate, sandstone, limestone, gravel, or clay ; but whatever the substance, it is laid in layers, not in a mass. These layers are scarcely ever horizontal, and may slope to any degree, often occurring vertical, the boldness of the hill outline commonly depending in a great degree on their inclination. In consequence of this division into beds, every mountain will have two great sets of lines more or less prevailing in its contours—one indicative of the surfaces of the beds, where they come out from under each other—and the other indicative of the extremities or edges of the beds, where their continuity has been interrupted. And these two great sets of lines will commonly be at right angles with each other, or nearly so. If the surface of the bed approach a horizontal line, its termination will approach the vertical, and this is the most usual and ordinary way in which a precipice is produced.

§ 2. Farther division of these beds by joints.

Farther, in almost all rocks there is a third division of substance, which gives to their beds a tendency to split transversely in some directions rather than others, giving rise to what geologists call "joints," and throwing the whole rock into blocks more or less rhomboidal ; so that the beds are not terminated by torn or ragged edges, but by faces comparatively smooth and even, usually inclined to each other at some definite angle. The whole arrangement may be tolerably represented by the bricks of a wall, whose tiers may be considered as strata, and whose sides and extremities will represent the joints by which those strata are divided, varying, however, their direction in different rocks, and in the same rock under differing circumstances.

§ 3. And by lines of lamination.

Finally, in the slates, grauwackes, and some calcareous beds, in the greater number, indeed, of *mountain* rocks, we find another most conspicuous feature of general structure—the lines of lamination, which divide the whole rock into an infinite number of delicate plates or layers, sometimes parallel to the direction or "strike" of the strata, oftener obliquely crossing it, and sometimes, apparently, altogether independent of it, maintaining a consistent and unvarying slope through a series of beds contorted and undulating in every conceivable direction. These lines of lamination extend their influence to the smallest fragment, causing it (as, for example, common roofing slate) to break smooth in one direction, and with a ragged edge in another, and marking the faces of the beds and joints with distinct and numberless lines, commonly far more conspicuous in a near view than the larger and more important divisions.

§ 4. Variety and seeming uncertainty under which these laws are manifested.

Now, it cannot be too carefully held in mind, in examining the principles of mountain structure, that nearly all the laws of nature with respect to external form are rather universal tendencies, evidenced by a plurality of instances, than imperative necessities complied with by all. For instance, it may be said to be a universal law with respect to the boughs of all trees that they incline their extremities more to the ground in proportion as they are lower on the trunk, and that the higher their point of insertion is, the more they share in the upward tendency of the trunk itself. But yet there is not a single group of boughs in any one tree which does not show exceptions to the rule, and present boughs lower in insertion, and yet steeper in inclination, than their neighbors. Nor is this defect or deformity, but the result of the constant habit of nature to carry variety into her very principles, and make the symmetry and beauty of her laws the more felt by the grace and accidentalism with which they are carried out. No one familiar with foliage could doubt for an instant of the necessity of giving evidence of this downward tendency in the boughs; but it would be nearly as great an offence against truth to make the law hold good with every individual branch, as not to exhibit its influence on the majority. Now, though the laws of mountain form are more rigid and constant than those of vegetation, they are subject to the same species of exception in carrying out. Though every mountain has these great tendencies in its lines, not one in a thousand of those lines is absolutely consistent with and obedient to this universal tendency. There are lines in every direction, and of almost every kind, but the sum and aggregate of those lines will invariably indicate the *universal* force and influence to which they are all subjected; and of these lines there will, I repeat, be two principal sets or classes, pretty nearly at right angles with each other. When both are inclined, they give rise to peaks or ridges; when one is nearly horizontal and the other vertical, to table-lands and precipices.

This then is the broad organization of all hills, modified afterwards by time and weather, concealed by superincumbent soil and vegetation, and ramified into minor and more delicate details in a way presently to be considered, but nevertheless universal in its great first influence, and giving to all mountains a particular cast and inclination; like the exertion of voluntary power in a definite direction, an internal spirit, manifesting itself in every crag, and breathing in every slope, flinging and forcing the mighty mass towards the heaven with an expression and an energy like that of life.

§ 5. The perfect expression of them in Turner's Loch Coriskin.

Now, as in the case of the structure of the central peaks described above, so also here, if I had to give a clear idea of this organization of the lower hills, where it is seen in its greatest perfection, with a mere view to geological truth, I should not refer to any geological drawings, but I should take the Loch Coriskin of Turner. It has luckily been admirably engraved, and for all purposes of reasoning or form, is nearly as effective in the print as in the drawing. Looking at any group of the multitudinous lines which make up this mass of mountain, they appear to be running anywhere and everywhere ; there are none parallel to each other, none resembling each other for a moment ; yet the whole mass is felt at once to be composed with the most rigid parallelism, the surfaces of the beds towards the left, their edges or escarpments towards the right. In the centre, near the top of the ridge, the edge of a bed is beautifully defined, casting its shadow on the surface of the one beneath it ; this shadow marking by three jags the chasms caused in the inferior one by three of its parallel joints. Every peak in the distance is evidently subject to the same great influence, and the evidence is completed by the flatness and evenness of the steep surfaces of the beds which rise out of the lake on the extreme right, parallel with those in the centre.

§ 6. Glencoe and other works.

Turn to Glencoe, in the same series (the Illustrations to Scott). We have in the mass of mountain on the left, the most beautiful indication of vertical beds of a finely laminated rock, terminated by even joints towards the precipice ; while the whole sweep of the landscape, as far as the most distant peaks, is evidently governed by one great and simple tendency upwards to the left, those most distant peaks themselves lying over one another in the same direction. In the Daphne hunting with Leucippus, the mountains on the left descend in two precipices to the plain, each of which is formed by a vast escarpment of the beds whose upper surfaces are shown between the two cliffs, sinking with an even slope from the summit of the lowest to the base of the highest, under which they evidently descend, being exposed in this manner for a length of five or six miles. The same structure is shown, though with more complicated development, on the left of the Loch Katrine. But perhaps the finest instance, or at least the most marked of all, will be found in the exquisite Mount Lebanon, with the convent of St. Antonio, engraved in Finden's Bible. There is not one shade nor touch on the rock which is not indicative of the lines of stratification; and every fracture is marked with a straightforward simplicity which makes you feel that the artist has nothing in his heart but a keen love of the pure unmodified truth; there is no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, no apparent aim at artificial arrangement or scientific grouping; the rocks are laid one above another with unhesitating decision; every shade is understood in a moment, felt as a dark side, or a shadow, or a fissure, and you may step from one block or bed to another until you reach the mountain summit. And yet, though there seems no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, see how it *is* disguised, just as nature would have done it, by the perpetual play and changefulness of the very lines which appear so parallel; now bending a little up, or down, or losing themselves, or running into each other, the old story over and over again,—infinity. For here is still the great distinction between Turner's work and that of a common artist. Hundreds could have given the parallelism of blocks, but none but himself could have done so without the actual repetition of a single line or feature.

§ 7. Especially the Mount Lebanon.

Now compare with this the second mountain from the left in the picture of Salvator, No. 220 in the Dulwich Gallery. The whole is first laid in with a very delicate and masterly gray, right in tone, agreeable in color, quite unobjectionable for a beginning. But how is this made into rock? On the light side Salvator gives us a multitude of touches, all exactly like one another, and therefore, it is to be hoped, quite patterns of perfection in rock-drawing, since they are too good to be even varied. Every touch is a dash of the brush, as nearly as possible in the shape of a comma, round and bright at the top, convex on its right side, concave on its left, and melting off at the bottom into the gray. These are laid in confusion one above another, some paler, some brighter, some scarcely discernible, but all alike in shape. Now, I am not aware myself of any particular

§ 8. Compared with the work of Salvator;

object, either in earth or heaven, which these said touches do at all resemble or portray. I do not, however, assert that they may not resemble something—feathers, perhaps; but I do say, and say with perfect confidence, that they may be Chinese for rocks, or Sanscrit for rocks, or symbolical of rocks in some mysterious and undeveloped character; but that they are no more *like* rocks than the brush that made them. The dark sides appear to embrace and overhang the lights; they cast no shadows, are broken by no fissures, and furnish, as food for contemplation, nothing but a series of concave curves.

§ 9. And of Poussin.

Yet if we go on to No. 269, we shall find something a great deal worse. I can believe Gaspar Poussin capable of committing as much sin against nature as most people; but I certainly do not suspect him of having had any hand in this thing, at least after he was ten years old. Nevertheless, it shows what he is supposed capable of by his admirers, and will serve for a broad illustration of all those absurdities which he himself in a less degree, and with feeling and thought to atone for them, perpetually commits. Take the white bit of rock on the opposite side of the river, just above the right arm of the Niobe, and tell me of what the square green daubs of the brush at its base can be conjectured to be typical. Rocks with pale-brown light sides, and rich green dark sides, are a phenomenon perhaps occurring in some of the improved passages of nature among our Cumberland lakes; where I remember once having seen a bed of roses, of peculiar magnificence, tastefully and artistically assisted in effect by the rocks above it being painted pink to match; but I do not think that they are a kind of thing which the clumsiness and false taste of nature can be supposed frequently to produce; even granting that these same sweeps of the brush could, by any exercise of the imagination, be conceived representative of a dark, or any other side, which is far more than I am inclined to grant; seeing that there is no cast shadow, no appearance of reflected light, of substance, or of character on the edge; nothing, in short, but pure, staring green paint, scratched heavily on a white ground. Nor is there a touch in the picture more expressive. All are the mere dragging of the brush here and there and everywhere, without meaning or intention ; winding, twisting, zigzagging, doing anything in fact which may serve to break up the light and destroy its breadth, without bestowing in return one hint or shadow of anything like form. This picture is, indeed, an extraordinary case, but the Salvator above mentioned is a characteristic and exceedingly favorable example of the usual mode of mountain drawing among the old landscape painters.* Their admirers may be challenged to bring forward a single instance of their expressing, or even appearing to have noted, the great laws of structure above explained. Their hills are, without exception, irregular earthy heaps, without energy or direction of any kind, marked with shapeless shadows and meaningless lines ; sometimes, indeed, where great sublimity has been aimed at, approximating to the pure and exalted ideal of rocks, which, in the most artistical specimens of China cups and plates, we see suspended from aerial pagodas, or balanced upon peacocks' tails, but never warranting even the wildest theorist in the conjecture that their perpetrators had ever seen a mountain in their lives. Let us, however, look farther into the modifications of character by which nature conceals the regularity of her first plan ; for although all mountains are organized as we have seen, their organization is always modified, and often nearly concealed, by changes wrought upon them by external influence.

§ 10. Effects of external influence on mountain form.

We ought, when speaking of their stratification, to have noticed another great law, which must, however, be understood with greater latitude of application than any of the others, as very far from imperative or constant in particular cases, though universal in its influence on the aggregate of all. It is that the lines by which rocks are terminated, are always steeper and more inclined to the vertical as we approach the summit of the mountain. Thousands of cases are to be found in every group, of rocks and lines horizontal at the top of the mountain and vertical at the bottom ; but they are still the exceptions, and the average out of a given number of lines in any rock formation whatsoever, will be found increasing in perpendicularity as they rise. Consequently the great skeleton lines of rock outline are always concave ; that is to say, all distant ranges of rocky mountain approximate more or less to a series of concave curves, meeting in peaks, like a range of posts with chains hanging between. I do not say that convex forms will not perpetually occur, but that the tendency of the majority will always be to assume the form of sweeping, curved valleys, with angular peaks ; not of rounded convex summits, with angular valleys. This structure is admirably exemplified in the second vignette in Rogers's Italy, and in Piacenza.

---

* I have above exhausted all terms of vituperation, and probably disgusted the reader ; and yet I have not spoken with enough severity: I know not any terms of blame that are bitter enough to chastise justly the mountain drawings of Salvator in the pictures of the Pitti Palace.

§ 11. The gentle convexity caused by aqueous erosion.

But although this is the primary form of all hills, and that which will always cut against the sky in every distant range, there are two great influences whose tendency is directly the reverse, and which modify, to a great degree, both the evidences of stratification and this external form. These are aqueous erosion and disintegration. The latter only is to be taken into consideration when we have to do with minor features of crags ; but the former is a force in constant action—of the very utmost importance—a force to which one-half of the great outlines of all mountains is entirely owing, and which has much influence upon every one of their details.

Now the tendency of aqueous action over a large elevated surface is *always* to make that surface symmetrically and evenly convex and dome-like, sloping gradually more and more as it descends, until it reaches an inclination of about 40°, at which slope it will descend perfectly straight to the valley ; for at that slope the soil washed from above will accumulate upon the hillside, as it cannot lie in steeper beds. This influence, then, is exercised more or less on all mountains, with greater or less effect in proportion as the rock is harder or softer, more or less liable to decomposition, more or less recent in date of elevation, and more or less characteristic in its original forms; but it universally induces, in the lower parts of mountains, a series of the most exquisitely symmetrical convex curves, terminating, as they descend to the valley, in uniform and uninterrupted slopes; this symmetrical structure being perpetually interrupted by cliffs and projecting masses, which give evidence of the interior parallelism of the mountain anatomy, but which interrupt the convex forms more frequently by rising out of them, than by indentation.

§ 12. And the effect of the action of torrents.

There remains but one fact more to be noticed. All mountains, in some degree, but especially those which are composed of soft or decomposing substance, are delicately and symmetrically furrowed by the descent of streams. The traces of their action commence at the very summits, fine as threads, and multitudinous, like the uppermost branches of a delicate tree. They unite in groups as they descend, concentrating gradually into dark undulating ravines, into which the body of the mountain descends on each side, at first in a convex curve, but at the bottom with the same uniform slope on each side which it assumes in its final descent to the plain, unless the rock be very hard, when the stream will cut itself a vertical chasm at the bottom of the curves, and there will be no even slope.* If, on the other hand, the rock be very soft, the slopes will increase rapidly in height and depth from day to day; washed away at the bottom and crumbling at the top, until, by their reaching the summit of the masses of rock which separate the active torrents, the whole mountain is divided into a series of penthouse-like ridges, all guiding to its summit, and becoming steeper and narrower as they ascend; these in their turn being divided by similar, but smaller ravines—caused in the same manner—into the same kind of ridges; and these again by another series, the arrangement being carried finer and farther according to the softness of the rock. The south side of Saddleback, in Cumberland, is a characteristic example; and the Montagne du Tacondy, in Chamonix, a noble instance of one of these ridges or buttresses, with all its subdivisions, on a colossal scale.

---

* Some terrific cuts and chasms of this kind occur on the north side of the Valais, from Sion to Briey. The torrent from the great Aletsch glacier descends through one of them. Elsewhere chasms may be found as narrow, but few so narrow and deep.

§ 13. The exceeding simplicity of contour caused by these influences.

Now we wish to draw especial attention to the broad and bold simplicity of mass, and the excessive complication of details, which influences like these, acting on an enormous scale, must inevitably produce in all mountain groups; because each individual part and promontory, being compelled to assume the same symmetrical curves as its neighbors, and to descend at precisely the same slope to the valley, falls in with their prevailing lines, and becomes a part of a great and harmonious whole, instead of an unconnected and discordant individual. It is true that each of these members has its own touches of specific character, its own projecting crags and peculiar hollows; but by far the greater portion of its lines will be such as unite with, though they do not repeat, those of its neighbors, and carry out the evidence of one great influence and spirit to the limits of the scene. This effort is farther aided by the original unity and connection of the rocks themselves, which though it often may be violently interrupted, is never without evidence of existence; for the very interruption itself forces the eye to feel that there is something to be interrupted, a sympathy and similarity of lines and fractures, which, however full of variety and change of direction, never lose the appearance of symmetry of one kind or another.

§ 14. And multiplicity of feature.

But, on the other hand, it is to be remembered that these great sympathizing masses are not one mountain, but a thousand mountains; that they are originally composed of a multitude of separate eminences, hewn and chiselled indeed into associating form, but each retaining still its marked points and features of character,—that each of these individual members has, by the very process which assimilated it to the rest, been divided and subdivided into equally multitudinous groups of minor mountains; finally, that the whole complicated system is interrupted forever and ever by daring manifestations of the inward mountain will—by the precipice which has submitted to no modulation of the torrent, and the peak which has bowed itself to no terror of the storm. Hence we see that the same imperative laws which require perfect simplicity of mass, require infinite and termless complication of detail,—that there will not be an inch nor a hairbreadth of the gigantic heap which has not its touch of separate character, its own peculiar curve, stealing out for an instant and then melting into the common line; felt for a moment by the blue mist of the hollow beyond, then lost when it crosses the enlightened slope,—that all this multiplicity will be grouped into larger divisions, each felt by their increasing aerial perspective, and their instants of individual form, these into larger, and these into larger still, until all are merged in the great impression and prevailing energy of the two or three vast dynasties which divide the kingdom of the scene.

§ 15. Both utterly neglected in ancient art.

There is no vestige nor shadow of approach to such treatment as this in the whole compass of ancient art. Whoever the master, his hills, wherever he has attempted them, have not the slightest trace of association or connection; they are separate, conflicting, confused, petty and paltry heaps of earth; there is no marking of distances or divisions in their body; they may have holes in them, but no valleys,—protuberances and excrescences, but no parts; and in consequence are invariably diminutive and contemptible in their whole appearance and impression.

§ 16. The fidelity of treatment in Turner's Daphne and Leucippus.

But look at the mass of mountain on the right in Turner's Daphne hunting with Leucippus. It is simple, broad, and united as one surge of a swelling sea; it rises in an unbroken line along the valley, and lifts its promontories with an equal slope. But it contains in its body ten thousand hills. There is not a quarter of an inch of its surface without its suggestion of increasing distance and individual form. First, on the right, you have a range of tower-like precipices, the clinging wood climbing along their ledges and cresting their summits, white waterfalls gleaming through its leaves; not, as in Claude's scientific ideals, poured in vast torrents over the top, and carefully keeping all the way down on the most projecting parts of the sides; but stealing down, traced from point to point, through shadow after shadow, by their evanescent foam and flashing light,—here a wreath, and there a ray,—through the deep chasms and hollow ravines, out of which rise the soft rounded slopes of mightier mountain, surge beyond surge, immense and numberless, of delicate and gradual curve, accumulating in the sky until their garment of forest is exchanged for the shadowy fold of slumbrous morning cloud, above which the utmost silver peak shines islanded and alone. Put what mountain painting you will beside this, of any other artist, and its heights will look like mole-hills in comparison, because it will not have the unity nor the multiplicity which are in nature, and with Turner, the signs of size.

§ 17. And in the Avalanche and Inundation.

Again, in the Avalanche and Inundation, we have for the whole subject nothing but one vast bank of united mountain, and one stretch of uninterrupted valley. Though the bank is broken into promontory beyond promontory, peak above peak, each the abode of a new tempest, the arbiter of a separate desolation, divided from each other by the rushing of the snow, by the motion of the storm, by the thunder of the torrent; the mighty unison of their dark and lofty line, the brotherhood of ages, is preserved unbroken; and the broad valley at their feet, though measured league after league away by a thousand passages of sun and darkness, and marked with fate beyond fate of hamlet and of inhabitant, lies yet but as a straight and narrow channel, a filling furrow before the flood. Whose work will you compare with this? Salvator's gray heaps of earth, seven yards high, covered with bunchy brambles, that we may be under no mistake about the size, thrown about at random in a little plain, beside a zigzagging river, just wide enough to admit of the possibility of there being fish in it, and with banks just broad enough to allow the respectable angler or hermit to sit upon them conveniently in the foreground? Is there more of nature in such paltriness, think you, than in the valley and the mountain which bend to each other like the trough of the sea; with the flank of the one swept in one surge into the height of heaven, until the pine forests lie on its immensity like the shadows of narrow clouds, and the hollow of the other laid league by league into the blue of the air, until its white villages flash in the distance only like the fall of a sunbeam?

But let us examine by what management of the details themselves this wholeness and vastness of effect are given. We have just seen (§ 11) that it is impossible for the slope of a mountain, not actually a precipice of rock, to exceed 35° or 40°, and that by far the greater part of all hill-surface is composed of graceful curves of much less degree than this, reaching 40° only as their ultimate and utmost inclination. It must be farther observed that the interruptions to such curves, by precipices or steps, are always small in proportion to the slopes themselves. Precipices rising vertically more than 100 feet are very rare among the secondary hills of which we are speaking. I am not aware of any cliff in England or Wales where a plumb-line can swing clear for 200 feet; and even although sometimes, with intervals, breaks, and steps, we get perhaps 800 feet of a slope of 60° or 70°, yet not only are these cases very rare, but even these have little influence on the great contours of a mountain 4000 or 5000 feet in elevation, being commonly balanced by intervals of ascent not exceeding 6° or 8°. The result of which is, first, that the peaks and precipices of a mountain appear as little more than jags or steps emerging from its great curves; and, secondly, that the bases of all hills are enormously extensive as compared with their elevation, so that there must be always a horizontal distance between the observer and the summit five or six times exceeding the perpendicular one.

§ 18. The rarity among secondary hills of steep slopes or high precipices.

Now it is evident, that whatever the actual angle of elevation of the mountain may be, every exhibition of this horizontal distance between us and the summit is an addition to its height, and of course to its impressiveness; while every endeavor to exhibit its slope as steep and sudden, is diminution at once of its distance and elevation. In consequence nature is constantly endeavoring to impress upon us this horizontal distance, which, even in spite of all her means of manifesting it, we are apt to forget or underestimate; and all her noblest effects depend on the full measurement and feeling of it. And it is to the abundant and marvellous expression of it by Turner, that I would direct especial attention, as being that which is in itself demonstrative of the highest knowledge and power—knowledge, in the constant use of lines of subdued slope in preference to steep or violent ascents, and in the perfect subjection of all such features, when they necessarily occur, to the larger masses; and power, in the inimitable statements of retiring space by mere painting of surface details, without the aid of crossing shadows, divided forms, or any other artifice.

§ 19. And consequent expression of horizontal distance in their ascent.

The Caudebec, in the Rivers of France, is a fine instance of almost every fact which we have been pointing out. We have in it, first, the clear expression of what takes place constantly among hills,—that the river, as it passes through the valley, will fall backwards and forwards from side to side, lying first, if I may so speak, with all its weight against the hills on the one side, and then against those on the other; so that, as here it is exquisitely told, in each of its circular sweeps the whole force of its current is brought deep and close to the bases of the hills, while the water on the side next the plain is shallow, deepening gradually. In consequence of this, the hills are cut away at their bases by the current, so that their slopes are interrupted by precipices mouldering to the water. Observe first, how nobly Turner has given us the perfect unity of the whole mass of hill, making us understand that every ravine in it has been cut gradually by streams. The first eminence, beyond the city, is not disjointed from, or independent of, the one succeeding, but evident-

§ 20. Full statement of all these facts in various works of Turner, Caudebec, etc.

ly part of the same whole, originally united, separated only by the action of the stream between. The association of the second and third is still more clearly told, for we see that there has been a little longitudinal valley running along the brow of their former united mass, which, after the ravine had been cut between, formed the two jags which Turner has given us at the same point in each of their curves. This great triple group has, however, been originally distinct from those beyond it ; for we see that these latter are only the termination of the enormous even slope, which appears again on the extreme right, having been interrupted by the rise of the near hills. Observe how the descent of the whole series is kept gentle and subdued, never suffered to become steep except where it has been cut away by the river, the sudden precipice caused by which is exquisitely marked in the last two promontories, where they are defined against the bright horizon ; and, finally, observe how, in the ascent of the nearest eminence beyond the city, without one cast shadow or any division of distances, every yard of surface is felt to be retiring by the mere painting of its details,—how we are permitted to walk up it, and along its top, and are carried, before we are half way up, a league or two forward into the picture. The difficulty of doing this, however, can scarcely be appreciated except by an artist.

§ 21. The use of considering geological truths.

I do not mean to assert that this great painter is acquainted with the geological laws and facts he has thus illustrated ; I am not aware whether he be or not ; I merely wish to demonstrate, in points admitting of demonstration, that intense observation of, and strict adherence to truth, which it is impossible to demonstrate in its less tangible and more delicate manifestations. However I may *feel* the truth of every touch and line, I cannot *prove* truth, except in large and general features ; and I leave it to the arbitration of every man's reason, whether it be not likely that the painter who is thus so rigidly faithful in great things that every one of his pictures might be the illustration of a lecture on the physical sciences, is not likely to be faithful also in small.

Honfleur, and the scene between Clairmont and Mauves, supply us with farther instances of the same grand simplicity of treatment; and the latter is especially remarkable for its expression of the furrowing of the hills by descending water, in the complete roundness and symmetry of their curves, and in the delicate and sharp shadows which are cast in the undulating ravines. It is interesting to compare with either of these noble works such hills as those of Claude, on the left of the picture marked 260 in the Dulwich Gallery. There is no detail nor surface in one of them; not an inch of ground for us to stand upon; we must either sit astride upon the edge, or fall to the bottom. I could not point to a more complete instance of mountain calumniation; nor can I oppose it more completely, in every circumstance, than with the Honfleur of Turner, already mentioned; in which there is not one edge nor division admitted, and yet we are permitted to climb up the hill from the town, and pass far into the mist along its top, and so descend mile after mile along the ridge to seaward, until, without one break in the magnificent unity of progress, we are carried down to the utmost horizon. And contrast the brown paint of Claude, which you can only guess to be meant for rock or soil because it *is* brown, with Turner's profuse, pauseless richness of feature, carried through all the enormous space—the unmeasured wealth of exquisite detail, over which the mind can dwell, and walk, and wander, and feast forever, without finding either one break in its vast simplicity, or one vacuity in its exhaustless splendor.

§ 22. Expression of retiring surface by Turner contrasted with the work of Claude.

But these, and hundreds of others which it is sin not to dwell upon—wooded hills and undulating moors of North England—rolling surges of park and forest of the South—soft and vine-clad ranges of French coteaux, casting their oblique shadows on silver leagues of glancing rivers,—and olive-whitened promontories of Alp and Apennine, are only instances of Turner's management of the lower and softer hills. In the bolder examples of his powers, where he is dealing

§ 23. The same moderation of slope in the contours of his higher hills.

with lifted masses of enormous mountain, we shall still find him as cautious in his use of violent slopes or vertical lines, and still as studied in his expression of retiring surface. We never get to the top of one of his hills without being tired with our walk ; not by the steepness, observe, but by the stretch ; for we are carried up towards the heaven by such delicate gradation of line, that we scarcely feel that we have left the earth before we find ourselves among the clouds. The Skiddaw, in the illustrations to Scott, is a noble instance of this majestic moderation. The mountain lies in the morning light, like a level vapor ; its gentle lines of ascent are scarcely felt by the eye ; it rises without effort or exertion, by the mightiness of its mass ; every slope is full of slumber ; and we know not how it has been exalted, until we find it laid as a floor for the walking of the eastern clouds. So again in the Fort Augustus, where the whole elevation of the hills depends on the soft lines of swelling surface which undulate back through leagues of mist carrying us unawares higher and higher above the diminished lake, until, when we are all but exhausted with the endless distance, the mountains make their last spring, and bear us, in that instant of exertion, half way to heaven.

§ 24. The peculiar difficulty of investigating the more essential truths of hill outline.

I ought perhaps rather to have selected, as instances of mountain form, such elaborate works as the Oberwesel or Lake of Uri, but I have before expressed my dislike of speaking of such magnificent pictures as these by parts. And indeed all proper consideration of the hill drawing of Turner must be deferred until we are capable of testing it by the principles of beauty ; for, after all, the most essential qualities of line,—those on which all right delineation of mountain character must depend, are those which are only to be explained or illustrated by appeals to our feeling of what is beautiful. There is an expression and a feeling about all the hill lines of nature, which I think I shall be able, hereafter, to explain ; but it is not to be reduced to line and rule—not to be measured by angles or described by compasses—not to be chipped out by the geologist, or equated by the mathematician. It is intangible, incalculable—a thing to be felt, not understood—to be loved, not comprehended—a music of the eyes, a melody of the heart, whose truth is known only by its sweetness.

I can scarcely, without repeating myself to tediousness, enter at present into proper consideration of the mountain drawing of other modern painters. We have, fortunately, several by whom the noble truths which we have seen so fully exemplified by Turner are also deeply felt and faithfully rendered; though there is a necessity, for the perfect statement of them, of such an unison of freedom of thought with perfect mastery over the greatest mechanical difficulties, as we can scarcely hope to see attained by more than one man in our age. Very nearly the same words which we used in reference to Stanfield's drawings of the central clouds, might be applied to his rendering of mountain truth. He occupies exactly the same position with respect to other artists in earth as in cloud. None can be said really to *draw* the mountain as he will, to have so perfect a mastery over its organic development; but there is, nevertheless, in all his works, some want of feeling and individuality. He has studied and mastered his subject to the bottom, but he trusts too much to that past study, and rather invents his hills from his possessed stores of knowledge, than expresses in them the fresh ideas received from nature. Hence, in all that he does, we feel a little too much that the hills are his own. We cannot swear to their being the particular crags and individual promontories which break the cone of Ischia, or shadow the waves of Maggiore. We are nearly sure, on the contrary, that nothing but the outline is local, and that all the filling up has been done in the study. Now, we have already shown (Sect. I. Chap. III.) that particular truths are more important than general ones, and this is just one of the cases in which that rule especially applies. Nothing is so great a sign of truth and beauty in mountain drawing as the appearance of individuality—nothing is so great a proof of real imagination and in-

§ 25. Works of other modern artists. Clarkson Stanfield.

§ 26. Importance of particular and individual truth in hill drawing.

vention, as the appearance that nothing has been imagined or invented. We ought to feel of every inch of mountain, that it *must* have existence in reality, that if we had lived near the place we should have known every crag of it, and that there must be people to whom every crevice and shadow of the picture is fraught with recollections, and colored with associations. The moment the artist can make us feel this—the moment he can make us think that *he* has done nothing, that nature has done all—that moment he becomes ennobled, he proves himself great. As long as we remember him, we cannot respect him. We honor him most when we most forget him. He becomes great when he becomes invisible. And we may, perhaps, be permitted to express our hope that Mr. Stanfield will—our conviction that he must—if he would advance in his rank as an artist, attend more to local character, and give us generally less of the Stanfield limestone. He ought to study with greater attention the rocks which afford finer divisions and more delicate parts (slates and gneiss ;) and he ought to observe more fondly and faithfully those beautiful laws and lines of swell and curvature, by intervals of which nature sets off and relieves the energy of her peaked outlines. He is at present apt to be too rugged, and, in consequence, to lose size. Of his best manner of drawing hills, I believe I can scarcely give a better example than the rocks of Suli, engraved in Finden's illustrations to Byron. It is very grand and perfect in all parts and points.

§ 27. Works of Copley Fielding. His hill feeling.

Copley Fielding is peculiarly graceful and affectionate in his drawing of the inferior mountains. But as with his clouds so with his hills ; as long as he keeps to silvery films of misty outline, or purple shadows mingled with the evening light, he is true and beautiful ; but the moment he withdraws the mass out of its veiling mystery, he is lost. His worst drawings, therefore, are those on which he has spent most time ; for he is sure to show weakness wherever he gives detail. We believe that all his errors proceed, as we observed before, from his not working with the chalk or pencil ; and that if he would paint half the number of pictures in the year which he usually produces, and spend his spare time in hard dry study of forms, the half he painted would be soon worth double the present value of all. For he really has deep and genuine feeling of hill character—a far higher perception of space, elevation, incorporeal color, and all those qualities which are the poetry of mountains, than any other of our water-color painters ; and it is an infinite pity that he should not give to these delicate feelings the power of realization, which might be attained by a little labor. A few thorough studies of his favorite mountains, Ben-Venue or Ben-Cruachan, in clear, strong, front chiaroscuro, allowing himself neither color nor mist, nor any means of getting over the ground but downright drawing, would, we think, open his eyes to sources of beauty of which he now takes no cognizance. He ought not, however, to repeat the same subjects so frequently, as the casting about of the mind for means of varying them blunts the feelings to truth. And he should remember that an artist, who is not making progress, is nearly certain to be retrograding ; and that progress is not to be made by working in the study, or by mere labor bestowed on the repetition of unchanging conceptions.

§ 28. Works of J. D. Harding and others.

J. D. Harding would paint mountains very nobly, if he made them of more importance in his compositions, but they are usually little more than backgrounds for his foliage or buildings ; and it is his present system to make his backgrounds very slight. His color is very beautiful : indeed, both his and Fielding's are far more refined than Stanfield's. We wish he would oftener take up some wild subject dependent for interest on its mountain forms alone, as we should anticipate the highest results from his perfect drawing ; and we think that such an exercise, occasionally gone completely through, would counteract a tendency which we perceive in his present distances, to become a little thin and cutting, if not incomplete.

The late G. Robson was a man most thoroughly acquainted with all the characteristics of our own island hills ; and some of the outlines of John Varley showed very grand feeling of energy of form.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE FOREGROUND.

We have now only to observe the close characteristics of the rocks and soils to which the large masses of which we have been speaking, owe their ultimate characters.

§ 1. What rocks were the chief components of ancient landscape foreground.

We have already seen that there exists a marked distinction between those stratified rocks whose beds are amorphous and without subdivision, as many limestones and sandstones, and those which are divided by lines of lamination, as all slates. The last kind of rock is the more frequent in nature, and forms the greater part of all hill scenery ; it has, however, been successfully grappled with by few, even of the moderns, except Turner ; while there is no single example of any aim at it or thought of it among the ancients, whose foregrounds, as far as it is possible to guess at their intention through their concentrated errors, are chosen from among the tufa and travertin of the lower Apennines, (the ugliest as well as the least characteristic rocks of nature,) and whose larger features of rock scenery, if we look at them with a predetermination to find in them a resemblance of *something*, may be pronounced at least liker the mountain limestone than anything else. I shall glance, therefore, at the general characters of these materials first, in order that we may be able to appreciate the fidelity of rock-drawing on which Salvator's reputation has been built.

§ 2. Salvator's limestones. The real characters of the rock. Its fractures and obtuseness of angles.

The massive limestones separate generally into irregular blocks, tending to the form of cubes or parallelopipeds, and terminated by tolerably smooth planes. The weather, acting on the edges of these blocks, rounds them off ; but the frost, which, while it cannot penetrate nor split the body of the stone, acts energetically on the angles, splits off the rounded fragments, and supplies sharp, fresh, and complicated edges. Hence the angles of such blocks are usually marked by a series of steps and fractures, in which the peculiar character of the rock is most distinctly seen ; the effect being increased in many limestones by the interposition of two or three thinner beds between the large strata of which the block has been a part ; these thin laminæ breaking easily, and supplying a number of fissures and lines at the edge of the detached mass. Thus, as a general principle, if a rock have character anywhere, it will be on the angle, and however even and smooth its great planes may be, it will usually break into variety where it turns a corner. In one of the most exquisite pieces of rock truth ever put on canvas, the foreground of the Napoleon in the Academy, 1842, this principle was beautifully exemplified in the complicated fractures of the upper angle just where it turned from the light, while the planes of the rock were varied only by the modulation they owed to the waves. It follows from this structure that the edges of all rock being partially truncated, first by large fractures, and then by the rounding of the fine edges of these by the weather, perpetually present *convex* transitions from the light to the dark side, the planes of the rock almost always swelling a little *from* the angle.

§ 3. Salvator's acute angles caused by the meeting of concave curves.

Now it will be found throughout the works of Salvator, that his most usual practice was to give a *concave* sweep of the brush for his first expression of the dark side, leaving the paint darkest towards the light ; by which daring and original method of procedure he has succeeded in covering his foregrounds with forms which approximate to those of drapery, of ribbons, of crushed cocked hats, of locks of hair, of waves, leaves, or anything, in short, flexible or tough, but which of course are not only unlike, but directly contrary to the forms which nature has impressed on rocks.*

---

* I have cut out a passage in this place which insisted on the *angular* character of rocks,—not because it was false, but because it was incomplete, and I cannot explain it nor complete it without example. It is not the absence of curves, but the suggestion of *hardness through* curves, and of the under tendencies of the inward structure, which form the

And the circular and sweeping strokes or stains which are dashed at random over their surfaces, only fail of destroying all resemblance whatever to rock structure from their frequent want of any meaning at all, and from the impossibility of our supposing any of them to be representative of shade. Now, if there be any part of landscape in which nature develops her principles of light and shade more clearly than another, it is rock; for the dark sides of fractured stone receive brilliant reflexes from the lighted surfaces, on which the shadows are marked with the most exquisite precision, especially because, owing to the parallelism of cleavage, the surfaces lie usually in directions nearly parallel. Hence every crack and fissure has its shadow and reflected light separated with the most delicious distinctness, and the organization and solid form of all parts are told with a decision of language, which, to be followed with anything like fidelity, requires the most transparent color, and the most delicate and scientific drawing. So far are the works of the old landscape-painters from rendering this, that it is exceedingly rare to find a single passage in which the shadow can even be distinguished from the dark side—they scarcely seem to know the one to be darker than the other; and the strokes of the brush are not used to explain or express a form known or conceived, but are dashed and daubed about without any aim beyond the covering of the canvas. "A rock," the old masters appear to say to themselves, "is a great irregular, formless, characterless lump; but it must have shade upon it, and any gray marks will do for that shade."

§ 4. Peculiar distinctness of light and shade in the rocks of nature.

§ 5. Peculiar confusion of both in the rocks of Salvator.

true characteristics of rock form; and Salvator, whom neither here nor elsewhere I have abused enough, is not wrong because he paints curved rocks, but because his curves are the curves of ribbons and not of rocks; and the difference between rock curvature and other curvature I cannot explain verbally, but I hope to do it hereafter by illustration; and, at present, let the reader study the rock-drawing of the Mont St. Gothard subject, in the Liber Studiorum, and compare it with any examples of Salvator to which he may happen to have access. All the account of rocks here given is altogether inadequate, and I only do not alter it because I first wish to give longer study to the subject.

Finally, while few, if any, of the rocks of nature are untraversed by delicate and slender fissures, whose black sharp lines are the only means by which the peculiar quality in which rocks most differ from the other objects of the landscape, brittleness, can be effectually suggested, we look in vain among the blots and stains with which the rocks of ancient art are loaded, for any vestige or appearance of fissure or splintering. Toughness and malleability appear to be the qualities whose expression is most aimed at ; sometimes sponginess, softness, flexibility, tenuity, and occasionally transparency. Take, for instance, the foreground of Salvator, in No. 220 of the Dulwich Gallery. There is, on the right-hand side of it, an object, which I never walk through the room without contemplating for a minute or two with renewed solicitude and anxiety of mind, indulging in a series of very wild and imaginative conjectures as to its probable or possible meaning. I think there is reason to suppose that the artist intended it either for a very large stone, or for the trunk of a tree ; but any decision as to its being either one or the other of these must, I conceive, be the extreme of rashness. It melts into the ground on one side, and might reasonably be conjectured to form a part of it, having no trace of woody structure or color ; but on the other side it presents a series of concave curves, interrupted by cogs like those of a water-wheel, which the boldest theorist would certainly not feel himself warranted in supposing symbolical of rock. The forms which this substance, whatever it be, assumes, will be found repeated, though in a less degree, in the foreground of No. 159, where they are evidently meant for rock.

§ 6. And total want of any expression of hardness or brittleness.

§ 7. Instances in particular pictures.

Let us contrast with this system of rock-drawing, the faithful, scientific, and dexterous studies of nature which we find in the works of Clarkson Stanfield. He is a man especially to be opposed to the old masters, because he usually confines himself to the same rock subjects as they—the mouldering and furrowed crags of the secondary formation which arrange themselves more

§ 8. Compared with the works of Stanfield.

or less into broad and simple masses; and in the rendering of these it is impossible to go beyond him. Nothing can surpass his care, his firmness, or his success, in marking the distinct and sharp light and shade by which the form is explained, never confusing it with local color, however richly his surface-texture may be given; while the wonderful play of line with which he will vary, and through which he will indicate, the regularity of stratification, is almost as instructive as that of nature herself. I cannot point to any of his works as better or more characteristic than others; but his Ischia, in the present British Institution, may be taken as a fair average example. The Botallack Mine, Cornwall, engraved in the Coast Scenery, gives us a very finished and generic representation of rock, whose primal organization has been violently affected by external influences. We have the stratification and cleavage indicated at its base, every fissure being sharp, angular, and decisive, disguised gradually as it rises by the rounding of the surface and the successive furrows caused by the descent of streams. But the exquisite drawing of the foreground is especially worthy of notice. No huge concave sweeps of the brush, no daubing or splashing here. Every inch of it is brittle and splintery, and the fissures are explained to the eye by the most perfect, speaking light and shade,—we can stumble over the edges of them.

§ 9. Their absolute opposition in every particular.

The East Cliff, Hastings, is another very fine example, from the exquisite irregularity with which its squareness of general structure is varied and disguised. Observe how totally contrary every one of its lines is to the absurdities of Salvator. Stanfield's are all angular and straight, every apparent curve made up of right lines, while Salvator's are all sweeping and flourishing like so much penmanship. Stanfield's lines pass away into delicate splintery fissures. Salvator's are broad daubs throughout. Not one of Stanfield's lines is like another. Every one of Salvator's mocks all the rest. All Stanfield's curves, where his universal angular character is massed, as on the left-hand side, into large sweeping forms, are convex Salvator's are every one concave.

The foregrounds of J. D. Harding and rocks of his middle distances are also thoroughly admirable. He is not quite so various and undulating in his line as Stanfield, and sometimes, in his middle distances, is wanting in solidity, owing to a little confusion of the dark side and shadow with each other, or with the local color. But his work, in near passages of fresh-broken, sharp-edged rock, is absolute perfection, excelling Stanfield in the perfect freedom and facility with which his fragments are splintered and scattered; true in every line without the least apparent effort. Stanfield's best works are laborious, but Harding's rocks fall from under his hand as if they had just crashed down the hill-side, flying on the instant into lovely form. In color also he incomparably surpasses Stanfield, who is apt to verge upon mud, or be cold in his gray. The rich, lichenous, and changeful warmth, and delicate weathered grays of Harding's rock, illustrated as they are by the most fearless, firm, and unerring drawing, render his wild pieces of torrent shore the finest things, next to the work of Turner, in English foreground art.

§ 10. The rocks of J. D. Harding.

J. B. Pyne has very accurate knowledge of limestone rock, and expresses it clearly and forcibly; but it is much to be regretted that this clever artist appears to be losing all sense of color and is getting more and more mannered in execution, evidently never studying from nature except with the previous determination to Pynize everything.*

---

* A passage which I happened to see in an Essay of Mr. Pyne's, in the Art-Union, about nature's "foisting rubbish" upon the artist, sufficiently explains the cause of this decline. If Mr. Pyne will go to nature, as all great men have done, and as all men who mean to be great must do, that is not merely to be *helped*, but to be *taught* by her; and will once or twice take her gifts, without looking them in the mouth, he will most assuredly find—and I say this in no unkind or depreciatory feeling, for I should say the same of all artists who are in the habit of only sketching nature, and not studying her—that *her* worst is better than *his* best. I am quite sure that if Mr. Pyne, or any other painter who has hitherto been very careful in his choice of subject, will go into the next turn-pike road, and taking the first four trees that he comes to in the hedge, give them a day each, drawing them leaf for leaf, as far

Before passing to Turner, let us take one more glance at the foregrounds of the old masters, with reference, not to their management of rock, which is comparatively a rare component part of their foregrounds, but to the common soil which they were obliged to paint constantly, and whose forms and appearances are the same all over the world.

§ 11. Characters of loose earth and soil.

A steep bank of loose earth of any kind, that has been at all exposed to the weather, contains in it, though it may not be three feet high, features capable of giving high gratification to a careful observer. It is almost a fac-simile of a mountain slope of soft and decomposing rock; it possesses nearly as much variety of character, and is governed by laws of organization no less rigid. It is furrowed in the first place by undulating lines, by the descent of the rain, little ravines, which are cut precisely at the same slope as those of the mountain, and leave ridges scarcely less graceful in their contour, and beautifully sharp in their chiselling. Where a harder knot of ground or a stone occurs, the earth is washed from beneath it, and accumulates above it, and there we have a little precipice connected by a sweeping curve at its summit with the great slope, and casting a sharp dark shadow; where the soil has been soft, it will probably be washed away underneath until it gives way, and leaves a jagged, hanging, irregular line of fracture; and all these circumstances are explained to the eye in sunshine with the most delicious clearness; every touch of shadow being expressive of some particular truth of structure, and bearing witness to the symmetry into which the whole mass has been reduced. Where this operation has gone on long, and vegetation has assisted in softening the outlines, we have our ground brought into graceful and irregular curves, of infinite

§ 12. Its exceeding grace and fulness of feature.

---

as may be, and even their smallest boughs with as much care as if they were rivers, or an important map of a newly-surveyed country, he will find, when he has brought them all home, that at least three out of the four are better than the best he ever invented. Compare Part III. Sect. I. Chap. III. § 12, 13, (the reference in the note ought to be to Chap. XV. § 7.)

variety, but yet always so connected with each other, and guiding to each other, that the eye never feels them as *separate* things, nor feels inclined to count them, nor perceives a likeness in one to the other; they are not repetitions of each other, but are different parts of one system. Each would be imperfect without the one next to it.

§ 13. The ground of Teniers.

Now it is all but impossible to express distinctly the particulars wherein this fine character of curve consists, and to show in definite examples, what it is which makes one representation right, and another wrong. The ground of Teniers, for instance, in No. 139 in the Dulwich Gallery, is an example of all that is wrong. It is a representation of the forms of shaken and disturbed soil, such as we should see here and there after an earthquake, or over the ruins of fallen buildings. It has not one contour nor character of the soil of nature, and yet I can scarcely tell you why, except that the curves repeat one another, and are monotonous in their flow, and are unbroken by the delicate angle and momentary pause with which the feeling of nature would have touched them, and are disunited; so that the eye leaps from this to that, and does not pass from one to the other without being able to stop, drawn on by the continuity of line; neither is there any undulation or furrowing of watermark, nor in one spot or atom of the whole surface, is there distinct explanation of form to the eye by means of a determined shadow. All is mere sweeping of the brush over the surface with various ground colors, without a single indication of character by means of real shade.

§ 14. Importance of these minor parts and points.

Let not these points be deemed unimportant; the truths of form in common ground are quite as valuable, (let me anticipate myself for a moment,) quite as beautiful, as any others which nature presents, and in lowland landscape they present us with a species of line which it is quite impossible to obtain in any other way,—the alternately flowing and broken line of mountain scenery, which, however small its scale, is always of inestimable value, contrasted with the repetitions of organic form which we are compelled to give in vegetation. A really great artist dwells on every inch of exposed soil with care and delight, and renders it one of the most essential, speaking and pleasurable parts of his composition. And be it remembered, that the man who, in the most conspicuous part of his foreground, will violate truth with every stroke of the pencil, is not likely to be more careful in other parts of it; and that in the little bits which I fix upon for animadversion, I am not pointing out solitary faults, but only the most characteristic examples of the falsehood which is everywhere, and which renders the whole foreground one mass of contradictions and absurdities. Nor do I myself see wherein the great difference lies between a master and a novice, except in the rendering of the finer truths, of which I am at present speaking. To handle the brush freely, and to paint grass and weeds with accuracy enough to satisfy the eye, are accomplishments which a year or two's practice will give any man; but to trace among the grass and weeds those mysteries of invention and combination, by which nature appeals to the intellect—to render the delicate fissure, and descending curve, and undulating shadow of the mouldering soil, with gentle and fine finger, like the touch of the rain itself—to find even in all that appears most trifling or contemptible, fresh evidence of the constant working of the Divine power "for glory and for beauty," and to teach it and proclaim it to the unthinking and the unregardless—this, as it is the peculiar province and faculty of the master-mind, so it is the peculiar duty which is demanded of it by the Deity.

§ 15. The observance of them is the real distinction between the master and the novice.

It would take me no reasonable nor endurable time, if I were to point out one half of the various kinds and classes of falsehood which the inventive faculties of the old masters succeeded in originating, in the drawing of foregrounds. It is not this man, nor that man, nor one school nor another; all agree in entire repudiation of everything resembling facts, and in the high degree of absurdity of what they substitute for them. Even Cuyp, who evidently saw and studied *near* nature, as an artist should do—not fishing for idealities, but taking what nature gave

§ 16. The ground of Cuyp.

him, and thanking her for it—even he appears to have supposed that the drawing of the earth might be trusted to chance or imagination, and, in consequence, strews his banks with lumps of dough, instead of stones. Perhaps, however, the "beautiful foregrounds" of Claude afford the most remarkable instances of childishness and incompetence of all. That of his morning landscape, with the large group of trees and high single-arched bridge, in the National Gallery, is a pretty fair example of the kind of error which he constantly falls into. I will not say anything of the agreeable composition of the three banks, rising one behind another from the water. I merely affirm that it amounts to a demonstration that all three were painted in the artist's study, without any reference to nature whatever. In fact, there is quite enough intrinsic evidence in each of them to prove this, seeing that what appears to be meant for vegetation upon them, amounts to nothing more than a green stain on their surfaces, the more evidently false because the leaves of the trees twenty yards farther off are all perfectly visible and distinct; and that the sharp lines with which each cuts against that beyond it, are not only such as crumbling earth could never show or assume, but are maintained through their whole progress ungraduated, unchanging, and unaffected by any of the circumstances of varying shade to which every one of nature's lines is inevitably subjected. In fact, the whole arrangement is the impotent struggle of a tyro to express, by successive edges, that approach of earth which he finds himself incapable of expressing by the drawing of the surface. Claude wished to make you understand that the edge of his pond came nearer and nearer: he had probably often tried to do this with an unbroken bank, or a bank only varied by the delicate and harmonized anatomy of nature; and he had found that owing to his total ignorance of the laws of perspective, such efforts on his part invariably ended in his reducing his pond to the form of a round O, and making it look perpendicular. Much comfort and solace of mind, in such unpleasant circumstances, may be derived from in-

§ 17. And of Claude.

§ 18. The entire weakness and childishness of the latter.

stantly dividing the obnoxious bank into a number of successive promontories, and developing their edges with completeness and intensity. Every school-girl's drawing, as soon as her mind has arrived at so great a degree of enlightenment as to perceive that perpendicular water is objectionable, will supply us with edifying instances of this unfailing resource; and this foreground of Claude's is only one out of the thousand cases in which he has been reduced to it. And if it be asked, how the proceeding differs from that of nature, I have only to point to nature herself, as she is drawn in the foreground of Turner's Mercury and Argus, a case precisely similar to Claude's, of earthy crumbling banks cut away by water. It will be found in this picture (and I am now describing nature's work and Turner's with the same words) that the whole distance is given by retirement of solid surface; and that if ever an edge is expressed, it is only felt for an instant, and then lost again; so that the eye cannot stop at it and prepare for a long jump to another like it, but is guided over it, and round it, into the hollow beyond; and thus the whole receding mass of ground, going back for more than a quarter of a mile, is made completely *one*—no part of it is separated from the rest for an instant—it is all united, and its modulations are *members*, not *divisions* of its mass. But those modulations are countless—heaving here, sinking there—now swelling, now mouldering, now blending, now breaking—giving, in fact, to the foreground of this universal master, precisely the same qualities which we have before seen in his hills, as Claude gave to his foreground precisely the same qualities which we had before found in *his* hills,—infinite unity in the one case, finite division in the other.

§ 19. Compared with the work of Turner.

Let us, then, having now obtained some insight into the principles of the old masters in foreground drawing, contrast them throughout with those of our great modern master. The investigation of the excellence of Turner's drawing becomes shorter and easier as we proceed, because the great distinctions between his work and that of other painters are the same, whatever the

§ 20. General features of Turner's foreground.

object or subject may be; and after once showing the general characters of the particular specific forms under consideration, we have only to point, in the works of Turner, to the same principles of infinity and variety in carrying them out, which we have before insisted upon with reference to other subjects.

The Upper Fall of the Tees, Yorkshire, engraved in the England series, may be given as a standard example of rock-drawing to be opposed to the work of Salvator. We have, in the great face of rock which divides the two streams, horizontal lines which indicate the real direction of the strata, and these same lines are given in ascending perspective all along the precipice on the right. But we see also on the central precipice fissures absolutely vertical, which inform us of one series of joints dividing these horizontal strata; and the exceeding smoothness and evenness of the precipice itself inform us that it has been caused by a great separation of substance in the direction of another more important line of joints, running in a direction across the river. Accordingly, we see on the left that the whole summit of the precipice is divided again and again by this great series of joints into vertical beds, which lie against each other with their sides towards us, and are traversed downwards by the same vertical lines traceable on the face of the central cliff. Now, let me direct especial attention to the way in which Turner has marked over this general and grand unity of structure, the modifying effects of the weather and the torrent. Observe how the whole surface of the hill above the precipice on the left* is brought into one smooth, unbroken curvature of gentle convexity, until it comes to the edge of the precipice, and then, just on the angle (compare § 2,) breaks into the multiplicity of fissure which marks its geological structure. Observe how every one of the separate blocks, into which it divides, is rounded and convex in its salient edges turned to the weather, and

§ 21. Geological structure of his rocks in the Fall of the Tees.

§ 22. Their convex surfaces and fractured edges.

---

* In the light between the waterfall and the large dark mass on the extreme right.

how every one of their inward angles is marked clear and sharp by the determined shadow and transparent reflex. Observe how exquisitely graceful are all the curves of the convex surfaces, indicating that every one of them has been modelled by the winding and undulating of running water; and how gradually they become steeper as they descend, until they are torn down into the face of the precipice.

§ 23. And perfect unity.

Finally, observe the exquisite variety of all the touches which express fissure or shade; every one in varying directions and with new forms, and yet throughout indicating that perfect parallelism which at once explained to us the geology of the rock, and falling into one grand mass, treated with the same simplicity of light and shade which a great portrait painter adopts in treating the features of the human face; which, though each has its own separate chiaroscuro, never disturb the wholeness and grandeur of the head, considered as one ball or mass. So here, one deep and marked piece of shadow indicates the greatest proximity of the rounded mass; and from this every shade becomes fainter and fainter, until all are lost in the obscurity and dimness of the hanging precipice and the shattering fall. Again, see how the same fractures just upon the edge take place with the central cliff above the right-hand fall, and how the force of the water is told us by the confusion of débris accumulated in its channel. In fact, the great quality about Turner's drawings which more especially proves their transcendent truth, is the capability they afford us of reasoning on past and future phenomena, just as if we had the actual rocks before us; for this indicates not that one truth is given, nor another, not that a pretty or interesting morsel has been selected here and there, but that the whole truth has been given, with all the relations of its parts; so that we can pick and choose our points of pleasure or of thought for ourselves, and reason upon the whole with the same certainty which we should after having climbed and hammered over the rocks bit by bit.

§ 24. Various parts whose history is told us by the details of the drawing.

With this drawing before him, a geologist could give a lecture upon the whole system of aqueous erosion, and speculate as safely upon the past and future states of this very spot, as if he were standing and getting wet with the spray. He would tell you, at once, that the waterfall was in a state of rapid recession; that it had once formed a wide cataract just at the spot where the figure is sitting on the heap of débris; and that when it was there, part of it came down by the channel on the left, its bed being still marked by the delicately chiselled lines of fissure. He would tell you that the foreground had also once been the top of the fall, and that the vertical fissures on the right of it were evidently then the channel of a side stream. He would tell you that the fall was then much lower than it is now, and that being lower, it had less force, and cut itself a narrower bed; and that the spot where it reached the higher precipice is marked by the expansion of the wide basin which its increased violence has excavated, and by the gradually increasing concavity of the rocks below, which we see have been hollowed into a complete vault by the elastic bound of the water. But neither he nor I could tell you with what exquisite and finished marking of every fragment and particle of soil or rock, both in its own structure and the evidence it bears of these great influences, the whole of this is confirmed and carried out.

§ 25. Beautiful instance of an exception to general rules in the Llanthony.

With this inimitable drawing we may compare the rocks in the foreground of the Llanthony. These latter are not divided by joints, but into thin horizontal and united beds, which the torrent in its times of flood has chiselled away, leaving one exposed under another, with the sweeping marks of its eddies upon their edges. And here we have an instance of an exception to a general rule, occasioned by particular and local action. We have seen that the action of water over any surface *universally*, whether falling, as in rain, or sweeping, as a torrent, induces convexity of form. But when we have rocks *in situ*, as here, exposed at their edges to the violent action of an eddy, that eddy will cut a vault or circular space for itself, (as we saw on a large scale with the high water-fall,) and we have a concave curve interrupting the general contours of the rock. And thus Turner (while every edge of his masses is rounded, and, the moment we rise above the level of the water, all is convex) has interrupted the great contours of his strata with concave curves, precisely where the last waves of the torrent have swept against the exposed edges of the beds. Nothing could more strikingly prove the depth of that knowledge by which every touch of this consummate artist is regulated, that universal command of subject which never acts for a moment on anything conventional or habitual, but fills every corner and space with new evidence of knowledge, and fresh manifestation of thought.

§ 26. Turner's drawing of detached blocks of weathered stone.

The Lower Fall of the Tees, with the chain-bridge, might serve us for an illustration of all the properties and forms of vertical beds of rock, as the upper fall has of horizontal; but we pass rather to observe, in detached pieces of foreground, the particular modulation of parts which cannot be investigated in the grand combinations of general mass.

The blocks of stone which form the foreground of the Ulleswater are, I believe, the finest example in the world of the finished drawing of rocks which have been subjected to violent aqueous action. Their surfaces seem to palpitate from the fine touch of the waves, and every part of them is rising or falling in soft swell or gentle depression, though the eye can scarcely trace the fine shadows on which this chiselling of the surface depends. And with all this, every block of them has individual character, dependent on the expression of the angular lines of which its contours were first formed, and which is retained and felt through all the modulation and melting of the water-worn surface. And what is done here in the most important part of the picture, to be especially attractive to the eye, is often done by Turner with lavish and overwhelming power, in the accumulated débris of a wide foreground, strewed with the ruin of ages, as, for instance, in the Junction of the Greta and Tees, where he has choked the torrent bed with the mass of shattered rock, thrown down with the profusion and carelessness of nature herself; and yet every separate block is a study, (and has evidently been drawn from nature,) chiselled and varied in its parts, as if it were to be the chief member of a separate subject; yet without ever losing, in a single instance, its subordinate position, or occasioning, throughout the whole accumulated multitude, the repetition of a single line.

I consider cases like these, of perfect finish and new conception, applied and exerted in the drawing of every member of a confused and almost countlessly-divided system, about the most wonderful, as well as the most characteristic passages of Turner's foregrounds. It is done not less marvellously, though less distinctly, in the individual parts of all his broken ground, as in examples like these of separate blocks. The articulation of such a passage as the nearest bank, in the picture we have already spoken of at so great length, the Upper Fall of the Tees, might serve us for a day's study, if we were to go into it part by part; but it is impossible to do this, except with the pencil; we can only repeat the same general observations, about eternal change and unbroken unity, and tell you to observe how the eye is kept throughout on solid and retiring surfaces, instead of being thrown, as by Claude, on flat and equal edges. You cannot find a single edge in Turner's work; you are everywhere kept upon round surfaces, and you go back on these you cannot tell how—never taking a leap, but progressing imperceptibly along the unbroken bank, till you find yourself a quarter of a mile into the picture, beside the figure at the bottom of the waterfall.

§ 27. And of complicated foreground.

Finally, the bank of earth on the right of the grand drawing of Penmaen Mawr, may be taken as the standard of the representation of soft soil modelled by descending rain; and may serve to show us how exquisite in character are the resultant lines, and how full of every species of attractive and even sublime quality, if we only are wise enough not to scorn the study of them. The higher the mind, it may be taken as a universal rule, the less it will scorn that which appears to be small or unimportant; and the rank

§ 28. And of loose soil.

of a painter may always be determined by observing how he uses, and with what respect he views the minutiæ of nature. Greatness of mind is not shown by admitting small things, but by making small things great under its influence. He who can take no interest in what is small, will take false interest in what is great; he who cannot make a bank sublime, will make a mountain ridiculous.

§ 29. The unison of all in the ideal foregrounds of the Academy pictures.

It is not until we have made ourselves acquainted with these simple facts of form, as they are illustrated by the slighter works of Turner, that we can become at all competent to enjoy the combination of all, in such works as the Mercury and Argus, or Bay of Baiæ, in which the mind is at first bewildered by the abundant outpouring of the master's knowledge. Often as I have paused before these noble works, I never felt on returning to them as if I had ever seen them before; for their abundance is so deep and various that the mind, according to its own temper at the time of seeing, perceives some new series of truths rendered in them, just as it would on revisiting a natural scene; and detects new relations and associations of these truths which set the whole picture in a different light at every return to it. And this effect is especially caused by the management of the foreground; for the more marked objects of the picture may be taken one by one, and thus examined and known; but the foregrounds of Turner are so united in all their parts that the eye cannot take them by divisions, but is guided from stone to stone, and bank to bank, discovering truths totally different in aspect, according to the direction in which it approaches them, and approaching them in a different direction, and viewing them as a part of a new system, every time that it begins its course at a new point.

§ 30. And the great lesson to be received from all.

One lesson, however, we are invariably taught by all, however approached or viewed,—that the work of the Great Spirit of nature is as deep and unapproachable in the lowest as in the noblest objects,—that the Divine mind is as visible in its full energy of operation on every lowly bank and mouldering stone, as in the lifting of the pillars of heaven, and settling the foundation of the earth ; and that to the rightly perceiving mind, there is the same infinity, the same majesty, the same power, the same unity, and the same perfection, manifest in the casting of the clay as in the scattering of the cloud, in the mouldering of the dust as in the kindling of the day-star.

SECTION V.

OF TRUTH OF WATER.

CHAPTER I.

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE ANCIENTS.

§ 1. Sketch of the functions and infinite agency of water.

Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds ; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace ; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen ; then as it exists in the form of the torrent—in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river ; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea ; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty ? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling ? It is like trying to paint a soul.

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water—to lay on canvas as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant—is, perhaps, the easiest task of art ; and even ordinary running or falling water may be sufficiently rendered, by observing careful curves of projection with a dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgment and truth by Ruysdael. But to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself—to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea waves, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient—so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion—with its variety and delicacy of color, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below ;—to do this perfectly, is beyond the power of man ; to do it even partially, has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it.

§ 2. The ease with which a common representation of it may be given. The impossibility of a faithful one.

As the general laws which govern the appearances of water have equal effect on all its forms, it would be injudicious to treat the subject in divisions ; for the same forces which govern the waves and foam of the torrent, are equally influential on those of the sea ; and it will be more convenient to glance generally at the system of water-painting of each school and artist, than to devote separate chapters to the examination of the lake, river, or sea-painting of all. We shall, therefore, vary our usual plan, and look first at the water-painting of the ancients ; then at that of the moderns generally ; lastly, at that of Turner.

§ 3. Difficulty of properly dividing the subject.

It is necessary in the outset to state briefly one or two of the optical conditions by which the appearance of the surface of water is affected ; to describe them all would require a separate essay, even if I possessed the requisite knowledge, which I do not. The accidental modifications under which general laws come into play are innumerable, and often, in their extreme complexity, inexplicable, I suppose, even by men of the most extended optical knowledge. What I shall here state are a

§ 4. Inaccuracy of study of water-effect among all painters.

few only of the broadest laws verifiable by the reader's immediate observation, but of which nevertheless, I have found artists frequently ignorant; owing to their habit of sketching from nature without thinking or reasoning, and especially of finishing at home. It is not often, I believe, that an artist draws the reflections in water as he sees them; over large spaces, and in weather that is not very calm, it is nearly impossible to do so; when it is possible, sometimes in haste, and sometimes in idleness, and sometimes under the idea of improving nature, they are slurred or misrepresented; it is so easy to give something like a suggestive resemblance of calm water, that, even when the landscape is finished from nature, the water is merely indicated as something that may be done at any time, and then, in the home work, come the cold leaden grays with some, and the violent blues and greens with others, and the horizontal lines with the feeble, and the bright touches and sparkles with the dexterous, and everything that is shallow and commonplace with all. Now, the fact is, that there is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues, of variable, pleasant light out of the sky; nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain bars, in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark, serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream, either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky—so it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise. Now, this farseeing is just the difference between the great and the vulgar painter; the common man *knows* the roadside pool is muddy, and draws its mud; the great painter sees beneath and behind the brown surface what will take him a day's work to follow, but he follows it, cost what it will. And if painters would only go out to the nearest common and take the nearest dirty pond among the furze, and draw that thoroughly, not considering that it is water that they are drawing, and that water must be done in a certain way ; but drawing determinedly what they *see*, that is to say, all the trees, and their shaking leaves, and all the hazy passages of disturbing sunshine ; and the bottom seen in the clearer little bits at the edge, and the stones of it, and all the sky, and the clouds far down in the middle, drawn as completely, and more delicately they must be, than the real clouds above, they would come home with such a notion of water-painting as might save me and every one else all trouble of writing more about the matter ; but now they do nothing of the kind, but take the ugly, round, yellow surface for granted, or else improve it, and, instead of giving that refined, complex, delicate, but saddened and gloomy reflection in the polluted water, they clear it up with coarse flashes of yellow, and green, and blue, and spoil their own eyes, and hurt ours ; failing, of course, still more hopelessly in touching the pure, inimitable light of waves thrown loose ; and so Canaletto is still thought to have painted canals, and Vandevelde and Backhuysen to have painted sea, and the uninterpreted streams and maligned sea hiss shame upon us from all their rocky beds and hollow shores.

§ 5. Difficulty of treating this part of the subject.

I approach this part of my subject with more despondency than any other, and that for several reasons ; first, the water painting of all the elder landscape painters, excepting a few of the better passages of Claude and Ruysdael, is so execrable, so beyond all expression and explanation bad ; and Claude's and Ruysdael's best so cold and valueless, that I do not know how to address those who like such painting ; I do not know what their sensations are respecting sea. I can perceive nothing in Vandevelde or Backhuysen of the lowest redeeming merit ; no power, no presence of intellect—or evidence of perception—of any sort or kind ; no resemblance—even the feeblest—of anything natural ; no invention—even the most sluggish—of anything agreeable. Had they given us staring green seas with hatchet edges, such as we see Her Majesty's ships so-and-so fixed into by the heads or sterns in the first room of the Royal Academy, the admiration of them would have been comprehensible; there being a natural predilection in the mind of men for green waves with curling tops, but not for clay and wool; so that though I can understand, in some sort, why people admire everything else in old art, why they admire Salvator's rocks, and Claude's foregrounds, and Hobbima's trees, and Paul Potter's cattle, and Jan Steen's pans; and while I can perceive in all these likings a root which seems right and legitimate, and to be appealed to; yet when I find they can even *endure* the *sight* of a Backhuysen on their room walls (I speak seriously) it makes me hopeless at once. I may be wrong, or they may be wrong, but at least I can conceive of no principle or opinion common between us, which either can address or understand in the other; and yet I am wrong in this want of conception, for I know that Turner once liked Vandevelde, and I can trace the evil influence of Vandevelde on most of his early sea painting, but Turner certainly could not have liked Vandevelde without *some* legitimate cause. Another discouraging point is that I cannot catch a wave, nor Daguerreotype it, and so there is no coming to pure demonstration; but the forms and hues of water must always be in some measure a matter of dispute and feeling, and the more so because there is no perfect or even tolerably perfect sea painting to refer to: the sea never has been, and I fancy never will be nor can be painted; it is only suggested by means of more or less spiritual and intelligent conventionalism; and though Turner has done enough to suggest the sea mightily and gloriously, after all it is by conventionalism still, and there remains so much that is unlike nature, that it is always possible for those who do not feel his power to justify their dislike, on very sufficient and reasonable grounds; and to maintain themselves obstinately unreceptant of the good, by insisting on the deficiency which no mortal hand can supply, and which commonly is most manifest on the one hand, where most has been achieved on the other.

With calm water the case is different. Facts are ascertainable and demonstrable there, and by the notice of one or two of the simplest, we may obtain some notion of the little success and intelligence of the elder painters in this easier field, and so prove their probable failure in contending with greater difficulties.

§ 6. General laws which regulate the phenomena of water. First, the imperfection of its reflective surface.

First : Water, of course, owing to its transparency, possesses not a perfectly reflective surface, like that of speculum metal, but a surface whose reflective power is dependent on the angle at which the rays to be reflected fall. The smaller this angle, the greater are the number of rays reflected. Now, according to the number of rays reflected is the force of the image of objects above, and according to the number of rays transmitted is the perceptibility of objects below the water. Hence the visible transparency and reflective power of water are in inverse ratio. In looking down into it from above, we receive transmitted rays which exhibit either the bottom, or the objects floating in the water ; or else if the water be deep and clear, we receive very few rays, and the water looks black. In looking along water we receive reflected rays, and therefore the image of objects above it. Hence, in shallow water on a level shore the bottom is seen at our feet, clearly ; it becomes more and more obscure as it retires, even though the water do not increase in depth, and at a distance of twelve or twenty yards —more or less according to our height above the water—becomes entirely invisible, lost in the lustre of the reflected surface.

§ 7. The inherent hue of water modifies dark reflections, and does not affect bright ones.

Second : The brighter the objects reflected, the larger the angle at which reflection is visible ; it is always to be remembered that, strictly speaking, only light objects are reflected, and that the darker ones are seen only in proportion to the number of rays of light that they can send ; so that a dark object comparatively loses its power to affect the surface of water, and the water in the space of a dark reflection is seen partially with the image of the object, and partially transparent. It will be found on observation that under a bank—suppose with dark trees above showing spaces of bright sky, the bright sky is reflected distinctly, and the bottom of the water is in those spaces not seen; but in the dark spaces of reflection we see the bottom of the water, and the color of that bottom and of the water itself mingles with and modifies that of the color of the trees casting the dark reflection.

This is one of the most beautiful circumstances connected with water surface, for by these means a variety of color and a grace and evanescence are introduced in the reflection otherwise impossible. Of course at great distances even the darkest objects cast distinct images, and the hue of the water cannot be seen, but in near water the occurrence of its own color modifying the dark reflections, while it leaves light ones unaffected, is of infinite value.

Take, by way of example, an extract from my own diary at Venice.

"May 17th, 4 P.M. Looking east the water is calm, and reflects the sky and vessels, with this peculiarity; the sky, which is pale blue, is in its reflection of the same kind of blue, only a little deeper; but the *vessels' hulls, which are black, are reflected in pale sea green, i.e.*, the natural color of the water under sunlight; while the *orange masts* of the vessels, wet with a recent shower, are reflected *without change of color*, only not quite so bright as above. One ship has a white, another a red stripe," (I ought to have said horizontal along the gunwales,) '*of these the water takes no notice.*'

"What is curious, a boat passes across with white and dark figures, the water reflects the dark ones in green, and misses out all the white; this is chiefly owing to the dark images being opposed to the bright reflected sky."

I have left the passage about the white and red stripe, because it will be useful to us presently; all that I wish to insist upon here is the showing of the local color (pea green) of the water in the spaces which were occupied by dark reflections, and the unaltered color of the bright ones.

Third; Clear water takes no shadow, and that for two rea·

sons ; A perfect surface of speculum metal takes no shadow, (this the reader may instantly demonstrate for himself,) and a perfectly transparent body as air takes no shadow ; hence water, whether transparent or reflective, takes no shadow.

§ 8. Water takes no shadow.

But shadows, or the forms of them, appear on water frequently and sharply : it is necessary carefully to explain the causes of these, as they are one of the most eminent sources of error in water painting.

First : Water in shade is much more reflective than water in sunlight. Under sunlight the local color of the water is commonly vigorous and active, and forcibly affects, as we have seen, all the dark reflections, commonly diminishing their depth. Under shade, the reflective power is in a high degree increased,* and it will be found most frequently that the forms of shadows are expressed on the surface of water, not by actual shade, but by more genuine reflection of objects above. This is another most important and valuable circumstance, and we owe to it some phenomena of the highest beauty.

A very muddy river, as the Arno for instance at Florence, is seen during sunshine of its own yellow color, rendering all reflections discolored and feeble. At twilight it recovers its reflective power to the fullest extent, and the mountains of Carrara are seen reflected in it as clearly as if it were a crystalline lake. The Mediterranean, whose determined blue yields to hardly any modifying color in daytime, receives at evening the image of its rocky shores. On our own seas, seeming shadows are seen constantly cast in purple and blue, upon pale green. These are no shadows, but the pure reflection of dark or blue sky above, seen in the shadowed space, refused by the local color of the sea in the sunlighted spaces, and turned more or less purple by the opposition of the vivid green.

---

* I state this merely as a fact : I am unable satisfactorily to account for it on optical principles, and were it otherwise, the investigation would be of little interest to the general reader, and little value to the artist.

We have seen, however, above, that the local color of water, while it comparatively refuses dark reflections, accepts bright ones without deadening them. Hence when a shadow is thrown across a space of water of strong local color, receiving, alternately, light and dark reflections, it has no power of increasing the reflectiveness of the water in the bright spaces, still less of diminishing it ; hence, on all the dark reflections it is seen more or less distinctly, on all the light ones it vanishes altogether.

§ 9. Modification of dark reflections by shadow.

Let us take an instance of the exquisite complexity of effect induced by these various circumstances in co-operation.

Suppose a space of clear water showing the bottom under a group of trees, showing sky through their branches, casting shadows on the surface of the water, which we will suppose also to possess some color of its own. Close to us, we shall see the bottom, with the shadows of the trees clearly thrown upon it, and the color of the water seen in its genuineness by transmitted light. Farther off, the bottom will be gradually lost sight of, but it will be seen in the dark reflections much farther than in the light ones. At last it ceases to affect even the former, and the pure surface effect takes place. The blue bright sky is reflected truly, but the dark trees are reflected imperfectly, and the color of the water is seen instead. Where the shadow falls on these dark reflections a darkness is seen plainly, which is found to be composed of the pure clear reflection of the dark trees ; when it crosses the reflection of the sky, the shadow of course, being thus fictitious, vanishes.

Farther, of course on whatever dust and other foulness may be present in water, real shadow falls clear and dark in proportion to the quantity of solid substance present. On very muddy rivers, real shadow falls in sunlight nearly as sharply as on land ; on our own sea, the apparent shadow caused by increased reflection, is much increased in depth by the chalkiness and impurity of the water.

Farther, when surface is rippled, every ripple, up to a certain variable distance on each side of the spectator, and at a certain angle between him and the sun, varying with the size and shape of the ripples, reflects to him a small image of the sun. Hence those dazzling fields of expanding light so often seen upon the sea.

Any object that comes between the sun and these ripples, takes from them the power of reflecting the sun, and in consequence, all their light; hence any intervening objects cast apparent shadows upon such spaces of intense force, and of the exact shape, and in the exact place of real shadows, and yet which are no more real shadows than the withdrawal of an image of a piece of white paper from a mirror is a shadow on the mirror. Farther, in all shallow water, more or less in proportion to its shallowness, but in some measure, I suppose, up to depths of forty or fifty fathoms, and perhaps more, the local color of the water depends in great measure on light reflected from the bottom. This, however, is especially manifest in clear rivers like the Rhone, where the absence of the light reflected from below forms an apparent shadow, often visibly detached some distance from the floating object which casts it.

§ 10. Examples on the water of the Rhone.

The following extract from my own diary at Geneva, with the subsequent one, which is a continuation of that already given in part at Venice, will illustrate both this and the other points we have been stating.

"GENEVA, 21*st April, Morning.*

"The sunlight falls from the cypresses of Rousseau's island straight towards the bridge. The shadows of the bridge and of the trees fall on the water in leaden purple, opposed to its general hue of aquamarine green. This green color is caused by the light being reflected from the bottom, though the bottom is not seen; as is evident by its becoming paler towards the middle of the river, where the water shoals, on which pale part the purple shadow of the small bridge falls most forcibly, which shadow, however, is still only apparent, being the absence of this reflected light, associated with the increased reflective power of the water, which in those spaces reflects blue sky above. A boat swings in the shoal water; its reflection is cast in a transparent pea-green, which is considerably darker than the pale aquamarine of the surface at the spot. Its shadow is detached from it just about half the depth of the reflection; which, therefore, forms a bright green light between the keel of the boat and its shadow; where the shadow cuts the reflection, the reflection is darkest and something like the true color of the boat; where the shadow falls out of the reflection, it is of a leaden purple, pale. The boat is at an angle of about 20° below. Another boat nearer, in deeper water, shows no shadow, whatsoever, and the reflection is marked by its transparent green, while the surrounding water takes a lightish blue reflection from the sky."

The above notes, after what has been said, require no comment; but one more case must be stated belonging to rough water. Every large wave of the sea is in ordinary circumstances divided into, or rather covered by, innumerable smaller waves, each of which, in all probability, from some of its edges or surfaces reflects the sunbeams; and hence result a glitter, polish, and vigorous light over the whole flank of the wave, which are, of course, instantly withdrawn within the space of a cast shadow, whose form, therefore, though it does not affect the great body or ground of the water in the least, is sufficiently traceable by the withdrawal of the high lights; also every string and wreath of foam above or within the wave takes real shadow, and thus adds to the impression.

I have not stated one-half of the circumstances which produce or influence effects of shadow on water; but lest I should confuse or weary the reader, I leave him to pursue the subject for himself; enough having been stated to establish this general principle, that whenever shadow is seen on clear water, and, in a measure, even on foul water, it is not, as on land, a dark shade subduing where it falls the sunny general hue to a lower tone; but it is a space of an entirely different color, subject itself, by its susceptibility of reflection, to infinite varieties of depth and hue, and liable, under certain circumstances, to disappear altogether; and that, therefore, whenever we have to paint such shadows, it is not only the hue of the water itself that we have to consider, but all the circumstances by which in the position attributed to them such shaded spaces could be affected.

Fourth: If water be rippled, the side of every ripple next to us reflects a piece of the sky, and the side of every ripple farthest from us reflects a piece of the opposite shore, or of whatever objects may be beyond the ripple. But as we soon lose sight of the farther sides of the ripples on the retiring surface, the whole rippled space will then be reflective of the sky only. Thus, where calm distant water receives reflections of high shores, every extent of rippled surface appears as a bright line interrupting that reflection with the color of the sky.

§ 11. Effect of ripple on distant water.

Fifth: When a ripple or swell is seen at such an angle as to afford a view of its farther side, it carries the reflection of objects farther down than calm water would. Therefore all motion in water elongates reflections, and throws them into confused vertical lines. The real amount of this elongation is not distinctly visible, except in the case of very bright objects, and especially of lights, as of the sun, moon, or lamps by a river shore, whose reflections are hardly ever seen as circles or points, which of course they are on perfectly calm water, but as long streams of tremulous light.

§ 12. Elongation of reflections by moving water.

But it is strange that while we are constantly in the habit of seeing the reflection of the sun, which ought to be a mere circle, elongated into a stream of light extending from the horizon to the shore, the elongation of the reflection of a sail or other object to one-half of this extent is received, if represented in a picture, with incredulity by the greater number of spectators. In one of Turner's Venices the image of the white lateen-sails of the principal boat is about twice as long as the sails themselves. I have heard the truth of this simple effect disputed over and over again by intelligent persons, and yet on any water so exposed as the lagoons of Venice, the periods are few and short when there is so little motion as that the reflection of sails a mile off shall not affect the swell within six feet of the spectator.

There is, however, a strange arbitrariness about this elongation of reflection, which prevents it from being truly felt. If we see on an extent of lightly swelling water surface the image of a bank of white clouds, with masses of higher accumulation at intervals, the water will not usually reflect the whole bank in an elongated form, but it will commonly take the eminent parts, and reflect them in long straight columns of defined breadth, and miss the intermediate lower parts altogether; and even in doing this it will be capricious, for it will take one eminence, and miss another, with no apparent reason; and often when the sky is covered with white clouds, some of those clouds will cast long tower-like reflections, and others none, so arbitrarily that the spectator is often puzzled to find out which are the accepted and which the refused.

In many cases of this kind it will be found rather that the eye is, from want of use and care, insensible to the reflection than that the reflection is not there; and a little thought and careful observation will show us that what we commonly suppose to be a surface of uniform color is, indeed, affected more or less by an infinite variety of hues, prolonged, like the sun image, from a great distance, and that our apprehension of its lustre, purity, and even of its surface, is in no small degree dependent on our feeling of these multitudinous hues, which the continual motion of that surface prevents us from analyzing or understanding for what they are.

Sixth: Rippled water, of which we can see the farther side of the waves, will reflect a perpendicular line clearly, a bit of its length being given on the side of each wave, and easily joined by the eye. But if the line slope, its reflection will be excessively confused and disjointed; and if horizontal, nearly invisible. It was this circumstance which prevented the red and white stripe of the ships at Venice, noticed above, from being visible.

§ 13. Effect of rippled water on horizontal and inclined images.

Seventh: Every reflection is the image in reverse of just so much of the objects beside the water, as we could see if we were placed as much under the level of the water as we are actually above it. If an object be so far back from the bank, that if we were five feet under the water level we could not see it over the bank, then, standing five feet above the water, we shall not be able to see its image under the reflected bank. Hence the reflection of all objects that have any slope back from the water is shortened, and at last disappears as we rise above it. Lakes seen from a great height appear like plates of metal set in the landscape, reflecting the sky but none of their shores.

§ 14. To what extent reflection is visible from above.

Eighth: Any given point of the object above the water is reflected, if reflected at all, at some spot in a vertical line beneath it, so long as the plane of the water is horizontal. On rippled water a slight deflection sometimes takes place, and the image of a vertical tower will slope a little away from the wind, owing to the casting of the image on the sloping sides of the ripples. On the sloping sides of large waves the deflection is in proportion to the slope. For rough practice, after the slope of the wave is determined, let the artist turn his paper until it becomes horizontal, and then paint the reflections of any object upon it as on level water, and he will be right.

§ 15 Deflection of images on agitated water.

Such are the most common and general optical laws which are to be taken into consideration in the painting of water. Yet, in the application of them, as tests of good or bad water painting, we must be cautious in the extreme. An artist may know all these laws, and comply with them, and yet paint water execrably; and he may be ignorant of every one of them, and, in their turn, and in certain places, violate every one of them, and yet paint water gloriously. Thousands of exquisite effects take place in nature, utterly inexplicable, and which can be believed only while they are seen; the combinations and applications of the above laws are so varied and complicated that no knowledge or labor could, if applied analytically, keep pace with them. Constant and eager watchfulness, and portfolios filled with actual

§ 16. Necessity of watchfulness as well as of science. Licenses, how taken by great men.

statements of water-effect, drawn on the spot and on the instant, are worth more to the painter than the most extended optical knowledge; without these all his knowledge will end in a pedantic falsehood. With these it does not matter how gross or how daring here and there may be his violations of this or that law; his very transgressions will be admirable.

It may be said, that this is a dangerous principle to advance in these days of idleness. I cannot help it; it is true, and must be affirmed. Of all contemptible criticism, the most to be contemned is that which punishes great works of art when they fight without armor, and refuses to feel or acknowledge the great spiritual refracted sun of their truth, because it has risen at a false angle, and burst upon them before its appointed time. And yet, on the other hand, let it be observed that it is not feeling, nor fancy, nor imagination, so called, that I have put before science, but watchfulness, experience, affection and trust in nature; and farther let it be observed, that there is a difference between the license taken by one man and another, which makes one license admirable, and the other punishable; and that this difference is of a kind sufficiently discernible by every earnest person, though it is not so explicable as that we can beforehand say where and when, or even to whom, the license is to be forgiven. In the Paradise of Tintoret, in the Academy of Venice, the Angel is seen in the distance driving Adam and Eve out of the garden. Not, for Tintoret, the leading to the gate with consolation or counsel; his strange ardor of conception is seen here as everywhere. Full speed they fly, the angel and the human creatures; the angel wrapt in an orb of light floats on, stooped forward in his fierce flight, and does not touch the ground; the chastised creatures rush before him in abandoned terror. All this might have been invented by another, though in other hands it would assuredly have been offensive; but one circumstance which completes the story could have been thought of or dared by none but Tintoret. The Angel cast a SHADOW before him towards Adam and Eve.

Now that a globe of light should cast a shadow is a license, as far as mere optical matters are concerned, of the most audacious kind. But how beautiful is the circumstance in its application here, showing that the angel, who is light to all else around him, is darkness to those whom he is commissioned to banish forever.

I have before noticed the license of Rubens in making his horizon an oblique line. His object is to carry the eye to a given point in the distance. The road winds to it, the clouds fly at it, the trees nod to it, a flock of sheep scamper towards it, a carter points his whip at it, his horses pull for it, the figures push for it, and the horizon slopes to it. If the horizon had been horizontal, it would have embarrassed everything and everybody.

In Turner's Pas de Calais there is a buoy poised on the ridge of a near wave. It casts its reflection vertically down the flank of the wave, which slopes steeply. I cannot tell whether this is a license or a mistake ; I suspect the latter, for the same thing occurs not unfrequently in Turner's seas ; but I am almost certain that it would have been done wilfully in this case, even had the mistake been pointed out, for the vertical line is necessary to the picture, and the eye is so little accustomed to catch the real bearing of the reflections on the slopes of waves that it does not feel the fault.

§ 17. Various licenses or errors in water painting of Claude, Cuyp, Vandevelde.

In one of the smaller rooms of the Uffizii at Florence, off the Tribune, there are two so-called Claudes ; one a pretty wooded landscape, I think a copy, the other a marine with architecture, very sweet and genuine. The sun is setting at the side of the picture, it casts a long stream of light upon the water. This stream of light is oblique, and comes from the horizon, where it is under the sun, to a point near the centre of the picture. If this had been done as a license, it would be an instance of most absurd and unjustifiable license, as the fault is detected by the eye in a moment, and there is no occasion nor excuse for it. But I imagine it to be an instance rather of the harm of imperfect science. Taking his impression instinctively from nature, Claude usually did what is right and put his reflection vertically under the sun ; probably, however, he had read in some treatise on optics that every point in this reflection was in a vertical plane between the sun and spectator ; or he might have noticed walking on the shore that the reflection came straight from the sun to his feet, and intending to indicate the position of the spectator, drew in his next picture the reflection sloping to the supposed point, the error being excusable enough, and plausible enough to have been lately revived and systematized.*

In the picture of Cuyp, No. 83 in the Dulwich Gallery, the post at the end of the bank casts three or four radiating reflections. This is visibly neither license nor half science, but pure ignorance. Again, in the picture attributed to Paul Potter, No. 176, Dulwich Gallery, I believe most people must feel, the moment they look at it, that there is something wrong with the water, that it looks odd, and hard, and like ice or lead ; and though they may not be able to tell the reason of the impression—for when they go near they will find it smooth and lustrous, and prettily painted—yet they will not be able to shake off the unpleasant sense of its being like a plate of bad mirror set in a model landscape among moss, rather than like a pond. The reason is, that while this water receives clear reflections from the fence and hedge on the left, and is everywhere smooth and evidently capable of giving true images, it yet reflects none of the cows.

In the Vandevelde (113) there is not a line of ripple or swell in any part of the sea ; it is absolutely windless, and the near boat casts its image with great fidelity, which being unprolonged downwards informs us that the calm is perfect, (Rule V.,) and being unshortened informs us that we are on a level with the water, or nearly so. (Rule VII.) Yet underneath the vessel on the right, the gray shade which stands for reflection breaks off immediately, descending like smoke a little way below the hull, then leaving the masts and sails entirely unrecorded. This I imagine to be not ignorance, but unjustifiable license. Vandevelde evidently desired to give an impression of great extent of surface, and thought that if he gave the reflection more faithfully, as the tops of the masts would come down to the nearest part of the surface, they would destroy the evidence of distance, and appear to set the ship above the boat instead of beyond it. I doubt not in such awkward hands that such would indeed have been the case, but he is not on that account to be excused for painting his surface with gray horizontal lines, as is done by nautically-disposed children ; for no destruction of distance in the ocean is so serious a loss as that of its liquidity. It is better to feel a want of extent in the sea, than an extent which we might walk upon or play at billiards upon.

---

* Parsey's "Convergence of Perpendiculars." I have not space here to enter into any lengthy exposure of this mistake, but reasoning is fortunately unnecessary, the appeal to experiment being easy. Every picture is the representation, as before stated, of a vertical plate of glass, with what might be seen through it, drawn on its surface. Let a vertical plate of glass be taken, and wherever it be placed, whether the sun be at its side or at its centre, the reflection will always be found in a vertical line under the sun, parallel with the side of the glass. The pane of any window looking to sea is all the apparatus necessary for this experiment, and yet it is not long since this very principle was disputed with me by a man of much taste and information, who supposed Turner to be wrong in drawing the reflection straight down at the side of his picture, as in his Lancaster Sands, and innumerable other instances.

Among all the pictures of Canaletto, which I have ever seen, and they are not a few, I remember but one or two where there is any variation from one method of treatment of the water. He almost always covers the whole space of it with one monotonous ripple, composed of a coat of well-chosen, but perfectly opaque and smooth sea-green, covered with a certain number, I cannot state the exact average, but it varies from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and upwards, according to the extent of canvas to be covered, of white concave touches, which are very properly symbolical of ripple.

§ 18. And Canaletto.

And, as the canal retires back from the eye, he very geometrically diminishes the size of his ripples, until he arrives at an even field of apparently smooth water. By our sixth rule, this rippling water as it retires should show more and more of the reflection of the sky above it, and less and less of that of objects beyond it, until, at two or three hundred yards down the canal, the whole field of water should be one even gray or blue, the color of the sky receiving no reflections whatever of other objects. What does Canaletto do? Exactly in proportion as he retires, he displays *more* and *more* of the reflection of objects, and less and less of the sky, until, three hundred yards away, all the houses are reflected as clear and sharp as in a quiet lake.

This, again, is wilful and inexcusable violation of truth, of which the reason, as in the last case, is the painter's consciousness of weakness. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to express the light reflection of the blue sky on a distant ripple, and to make the eye understand the cause of the color, and the motion of the apparently smooth water, especially where there are buildings above to be reflected, for the eye never understands the want of the reflection. But it is the easiest and most agreeable thing in the world to give the inverted image: it occupies a vast space of otherwise troublesome distance in the simplest way possible, and is understood by the eye at once. Hence Canaletto is glad, as any other inferior workman would be, not to say obliged, to give the reflections in the distance. But when he comes up close to the spectator, he finds the smooth surface just as troublesome near, as the ripple would have been far off. It is a very nervous thing for an ignorant artist to have a great space of vacant smooth water to deal with, close to him, too far down to take reflections from buildings, and yet which must be made to look flat and retiring and transparent. Canaletto, with his sea-green, did not at all feel himself equal to anything of this kind, and had therefore no resource but in the white touches above described, which occupy the alarming space without any troublesome necessity for knowledge or invention, and supply by their gradual diminution some means of expressing retirement of surface. It is easily understood, therefore, why he should adopt this system, which is just what any awkward workman would naturally cling to, trusting to the inaccuracy of observation of the public to secure him from detection.

Now in all these cases it is not the mistake or the license itself, it is not the infringement of this or that law which condemns the picture, but it is the spirit and habit of mind in which the license is taken, the cowardice or bluntness of feeling, which infects every part alike, and deprives the whole picture of vitality. Canaletto, had he been a great painter, might have cast his reflections wherever he chose, and rippled the water wherever he chose, and painted his sea sloping if he chose, and neither I nor any one else should have dared to say a word against him ; but he is a little and a bad painter, and so continues everywhere multiplying and magnifying mistakes, and adding apathy to error, until nothing can any more be pardoned in him. If it be but remembered that every one of the surfaces of those multitudinous ripples is in nature a mirror which catches, according to its position, either the image of the sky or of the silver beaks of the gondolas, or of their black bodies and scarlet draperies, or of the white marble, or the green sea-weed on the low stones, it cannot but be felt that those waves would have something more of color upon them than that opaque dead green. Green they are by their own nature, but it is a transparent and emerald hue, mixing itself with the thousand reflected tints without overpowering the weakest of them ; and thus, in every one of those individual waves, the truths of color are contradicted by Canaletto by the thousand.

§ 19. Why unpardonable.

Venice is sad and silent now, to what she was in his time ; the canals are choked gradually one by one, and the foul water laps more and more sluggishly against the rent foundations ; but even yet, could I but place the reader at the early morning on the quay below the Rialto, when the market boats, full laden, float into groups of golden color, and let him watch the dashing of the water about their glittering steely heads, and under the shadows of the vine leaves, and show him the purple of the grapes and the figs, and the glowing of the scarlet gourds carried away in long streams upon the waves, and among them, the crimson fish baskets, plashing and sparkling, and flaming as the morning sun falls on their wet tawny sides, and above, the painted sails of the fishing boats, orange and white, scarlet and blue, and better than all such florid color, the naked, bronzed, burning limbs of the seamen, the last of the old Venetian race, who yet keep the right Giorgione color on their brows and bosoms, in strange contrast with the sallow sensual degradation of the creatures that live in the cafés of the Piazza, he would not be merciful to Canaletto any more.

§ 20. The Dutch painters of sea.

Yet even Canaletto, in relation to the truths he had to paint, is spiritual, faithful, powerful, compared to the Dutch painters of sea. It is easily understood why his green paint and concave touches should be thought expressive of the water on which the real colors are not to be discerned but by attention, which is never given; but it is not so easily understood, considering how many there are who love the sea, and look at it, that Vandevelde and such others should be tolerated. As I before said, I feel utterly hopeless in addressing the admirers of these men, because I do not know what it is in their works which is supposed to be like nature. Foam appears to me to curdle and cream on the wave sides and to fly, flashing from their crests, and not to be set astride upon them like a peruke; and waves appear to me to fall, and plunge, and toss, and nod, and crash over, and not to curl up like shavings; and water appears to me, when it is gray, to have the gray of stormy air mixed with its own deep, heavy, thunderous, threatening blue, and not the gray of the first coat of cheap paint on a deal floor; and many other such things appear to me which, as far as I can conjecture by what is admired of marine painting, appear to no one else; yet I shall have something more to say about these men presently, with respect to the effect they have had upon Turner; and something more, I hope, hereafter, with the help of illustration.

There is a sea-piece of Ruysdael's in the Louvre * which,

---

* In the last edition of this work was the following passage:—"I wish Ruysdael had painted one or two rough seas. I believe if he had he might have saved the unhappy public from much grievous victimizing, both in mind and pocket, for he would have shown that Vande-

though nothing very remarkable in any quality of art, is at least forceful, agreeable, and, as far as it goes, natural; the waves have much freedom of action, and power of color; the wind blows hard over the shore, and the whole picture may be studied with profit as a proof that the deficiency of color and everything else in Backhuysen's works, is no fault of the Dutch sea. There is sublimity and power in every field of nature from the pole to the line; and though the painters of one country are often better and greater, universally, than those of another, this is less because the subjects of art are wanting anywhere, than because one country or one age breeds mighty and thinking men, and another none.

§ 21. Ruysdael, Claude, and Salvator.

Ruysdael's painting of falling water and brook scenery is also generally agreeable—more than agreeable it can hardly be considered. There appears no exertion of mind in any of his works; nor are they calculated to produce either harm or good by their feeble influence. They are good furniture pictures, unworthy of praise, and undeserving of blame.

The seas of Claude are the finest pieces of water-painting in ancient art. I do not say that I like them, because they appear to me selections of the particular moment when the sea is most insipid and characterless; but I think that they are exceedingly true to the forms and time selected, or at least that the fine instances of them are so, of which there are exceedingly few.

On the right hand of one of the marines of Salvator, in the Pitti palace, there is a passage of sea reflecting the sunrise, which is thoroughly good, and very like Turner; the rest of the picture, as the one opposite to it, utterly virtue-

velde and Backhuysen were not quite sea-deities." The writer has to thank the editor of Murray's Handbook of Painting in Italy for pointing out the oversight. He had passed many days in the Louvre before the above passage was written. but had not been in the habit of pausing long anywhere except in the last two rooms, containing the pictures of the Italian school. The conjecture, however, shows that he had not ill-estimated the power of Ruysdael; nor does he consider it as in anywise unfitting him for the task he has undertaken, that for every hour passed in galleries he has passed days on the sea-shore.

less. I have not seen any other instance of Salvator's painting water with any care, it is usually as conventional as the rest of his work, yet conventionalism is perhaps more tolerable in water-painting than elsewhere; and if his trees and rocks had been good, the rivers might have been generally accepted without objection.

§ 22. Nicholas Poussin.

The merits of Poussin as a sea or water painter may, I think, be sufficiently determined by the Deluge in the Louvre, where the breaking up of the fountains of the deep is typified by the capsizing of a wherry over a weir.

In the outer porch of St. Mark's at Venice, among the mosaics on the roof, there is a representation of the deluge. The ground is dark blue; the rain is represented in bright white undulating parallel stripes; between these stripes is seen the massy outline of the ark, a bit between each stripe, very dark and hardly distinguishable from the sky; but it has a square window with a bright golden border, which glitters out conspicuously, and leads the eye to the rest—the sea below is almost concealed with dead bodies.

On the font of the church of San Frediano at Lucca, there is a representation of—possibly—the Israelites and Egyptians in the Red Sea. The sea is typified by undulating bands of stone, each band composed of three plies (almost the same type is to be seen in the glass-painting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as especially at Chartres). These bands would perhaps be hardly felt as very aqueous, but for the fish which are interwoven with them in a complicated manner, their heads appearing at one side of every band, and their tails at the other.

Both of these representatives of deluge, archaic and rude as they are, I consider better, more suggestive, more inventive, and more natural, than Poussin's. Indeed, this is not saying anything very depreciatory, as regards the St. Mark's one, for the glittering of the golden window through the rain is wonderfully well conceived, and almost deceptive, looking as if it had just caught a gleam of sunlight on its panes, and there is something very sublime in the gleam of this light above the floating corpses. But the other instance is sufficiently grotesque and imperfect, and yet, I speak with perfect seriousness, it is, I think, very far preferable to Poussin's.

On the other hand, there is a just medium between the meanness and apathy of such a conception as his, and the extravagance, still more contemptible, with which the subject has been treated in modern days.* I am not aware that I can refer to any instructive example of this intermediate course, for I fear the reader is by this time wearied of hearing of Turner, and the plate of Turner's picture of the deluge is so rare that it is of no use to refer to it.

§ 23. Venetians and Florentines. Conclusion.

It seems exceedingly strange that the great Venetian painters should have left us no instance, as far as I know, of any marine effects carefully studied. As already noted, whatever passages of sea occur in their backgrounds are merely broad extents of blue or green surface, fine in color, and coming dark usually against the horizon, well enough to be understood as sea, (yet even that not always without the help of a ship,) but utterly unregarded in all questions of completion and detail. The water even in Titian's landscape is almost always violently though grandly conventional, and seldom forms an important feature. Among the religious schools very sweet motives occur, but nothing which for a moment can be considered as real water-painting. Perugino's sea is usually very beautifully felt ; his river in the fresco of S^{ta}. Maddalena at Florence is freely indicated, and looks level and clear ; the reflections of the trees given with a rapid zigzag stroke of the brush. On the whole, I suppose that the best imitations of level water surface to be found in ancient art are in the clear Flemish landscapes. Cuyp's are usually very satisfactory, but even the best of these attain nothing more than the agreeable suggestion of calm pond or river.

---

* I am here, of course, speaking of the treatment of the subject as a landscape only ; many mighty examples of its conception occur where the sea, and all other adjuncts, are entirely subservient to the figures, as with Raffaelle and M. Angelo.

Of any tolerable representation of water in agitation, or under any circumstances that bring out its power and character, I know no instance; and the more capable of noble treatment the subject happens to be, the more manifest invariably is the painter's want of feeling in every effort, and of knowledge in every line.

CHAPTER II.

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE MODERNS.

§ 1. General power of the moderns in painting quiet water. The lakes of Fielding.

There are few men among modern landscape painters, who cannot paint quiet water at least suggestively, if not faithfully. Those who are incapable of doing this, would scarcely be considered artists at all; and anything like the ripples of Canaletto, or the black shadows of Vandevelde, would be looked upon as most unpromising, even in the work of a novice. Among those who most fully appreciate and render the qualities of space and surface in calm water, perhaps Copley Fielding stands first. His expanses of windless lake are among the most perfect passages of his works; for he can give surface as well as depth, and make his lake look not only clear, but, which is far more difficult, lustrous. He is less dependent than most of our artists upon reflections; and can give substance, transparency, and extent, where another painter would be reduced to paper; and he is exquisitely refined in his expression of distant breadth, by the delicate line of ripple interrupting the reflection, and by aerial qualities of color. Nothing, indeed, can be purer or more refined than his general feeling of lake sentiment, were it not for a want of simplicity—a fondness for pretty, rather than impressive color, and a consequent want of some of the higher expression of repose.

§ 2. The calm rivers of De Wint, J. Holland, etc.

Hundreds of men might be named, whose works are highly instructive in the management of calm water. De Wint is singularly powerful and certain, exquisitely bright and vigorous in color. The late

John Varley produced some noble passages. I have seen, some seven years ago, works by J. Holland, which were, I think, as near perfection as water-color can be carried—for *bona fide* truth, refined and finished to the highest degree. But the power of modern artists is not brought out until they have greater difficulties to struggle with. Stand for half an hour beside the fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure, polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick—so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam; and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless, crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens which chase and checker them with purple and silver. I believe, when you have stood by this for half an hour, you will have discovered that there is something more in nature than has been given by Ruysdael. Probably you will not be much disposed to think of any mortal work at the time; but

§ 3. The character of bright and violent falling water.

§ 4. As given by Nesfield.

when you look back to what you have seen, and are inclined to compare it with art, you will remember—or ought to remember—Nesfield. He is a man of extraordinary feeling, both for the color and the spirituality of a great waterfall ; exquisitely delicate in his management of the changeful veil of spray or mist ; just in his curves and contours ; and unequalled in color except by Turner. None of our water-color painters can approach him in the management of the variable hues of clear water over weeded rocks ; but his feeling for it often leads him a little too far, and, like Copley Fielding, he loses sight of simplicity and dignity for the sake of delicacy or prettiness. His waterfalls are, however, unequalled in their way ; and, if he would remember, that in all such scenes there is much gloom as well as much splendor, and relieve the lustre of his attractive passages of color with more definite and prevalent grays, and give a little more substance to parts of his picture unaffected by spray, his work would be nearly perfect. His seas are also most instructive ; a little confused in chiaroscuro, but refined in form and admirable in color.

§ 5. The admirable water-drawing of J. D. Harding.

J. D. Harding is, I think, nearly unequalled in the *drawing* of running water. I do not know what Stanfield would do ; I have never seen an important piece of torrent drawn by him ; but I believe even he could scarcely contend with the magnificent *abandon* of Harding's brush. There is perhaps nothing which tells more in the drawing of water than decisive and swift execution ; for, in a rapid touch the hand naturally falls into the very curve of projection which is the absolute truth ; while in slow finish, all precision of curve and character is certain to be lost, except under the hand of an unusually powerful master. But Harding has both knowledge and velocity, and the fall of his torrents is beyond praise ; impatient, chafing, substantial, shattering, crystalline, and capricious ; full of various form, yet all apparently instantaneous and accidental, nothing conventional, nothing dependent upon parallel lines or radiating curves ; all broken up and dashed to pieces over the irregular rock, and yet all

§ 6. His color; and painting of sea.

in unity of motion. The color also of his *falling* and bright water is very perfect; but in the dark and level parts of his torrents he has taken up a bad gray, which has hurt some of his best pictures. His gray in shadows under rocks or dark reflections is admirable; but it is when the stream is in full light, and unaffected by reflections in distance, that he gets wrong. We believe that the fault is in a want of expression of darkness in the color, making it appear like a positive hue of the water, for which it is much too dead and cold.

Harding seldom paints sea, and it is well for Stanfield that he does not, or the latter would have to look to his crown. All that we have seen from his hand is, as coast sea, quite faultless; we only wish he would paint it more frequently; always, however, with a veto upon French fishing-boats. In the Exhibition of 1842, he spoiled one of the most superb pieces of seashore and sunset which modern art has produced, with the pestilent square sail of one of these clumsy craft, which the eye could not escape from.

§ 7. The sea of Copley Fielding. Its exceeding grace and rapidity.

Before passing to our great sea painter, we must again refer to the works of Copley Fielding. It is with his sea as with his sky, he can only paint one, and that an easy one, but it is, for all that, an impressive and a true one. No man has ever given, with the same flashing freedom, the race of a running tide under a stiff breeze, nor caught, with the same grace and precision, the curvature of the breaking wave, arrested or accelerated by the wind. The forward fling of his foam, and the impatient run of his surges, whose quick, redoubling dash we can almost hear, as they break in their haste upon their own bosoms, are nature itself, and his sea gray or green was, nine years ago, very right, as color; always a little wanting in transparency, but never cold or toneless. Since that time, he seems to have lost the sense of greenness in water, and has verged more and more on the purple and black, with unhappy results. His sea was always dependent for effect on its light or dark relief against the sky, even when it possessed color; but it now has lost all local color and transparency together, and is little more than a study of chiaroscuro in an exceedingly ill-chosen gray. Besides, the perpetual repetition of the same idea is singularly weakening to the mind. Fielding, in all his life, can only be considered as having produced *one* sea picture. The others are duplicates. He ought to go to some sea of perfect clearness and brilliant color, as that on the coast of Cornwall, or of the Gulf of Genoa, and study it sternly in broad daylight, with no black clouds nor drifting rain to help him out of his difficulties. He would then both learn his strength and add to it.

§ 8. Its high aim at character.

But there is one point in all his seas deserving especial praise—a marked aim at *character*. He desires, especially in his latter works, not so much to produce an agreeable picture, a scientific piece of arrangement, or delightful melody of color, as to make us feel the utter desolation, the cold, withering, frozen hopelessness of the continuous storm and merciless sea. And this is peculiarly remarkable in his denying himself all color, just in the little bits which an artist of inferior mind would paint in sienna and cobalt. If a piece of broken wreck is allowed to rise for an instant through the boiling foam, though the blue stripe of a sailor's jacket, or a red rag of a flag would do all our hearts good, we are not allowed to have it; it would make us too comfortable, and prevent us from shivering and shrinking as we look, and the artist, with admirable intention, and most meritorious self-denial, expresses his piece of wreck with a dark, cold brown. Now we think this aim and effort worthy of the highest praise, and we only wish the lesson were taken up and acted on by our other artists; but Mr. Fielding should remember that nothing of this kind can be done with success unless by the most studied management of the general tones of the picture; for the eye, deprived of all means of enjoying the gray hues, merely as a contrast to bright points, becomes painfully fastidious in the quality of the hues themselves, and demands for its satisfaction such melodies and richness of gray as may in some degree atone to it for the loss of points of stimulus. That gray which

§ 9. But deficiency in the requisite quality of grays.

would be taken frankly and freely for an expression of gloom, if it came behind a yellow sail or a red cap, is examined with invidious and merciless intentness when there is nothing to relieve it, and, if not able to bear the investigation, if neither agreeable nor variable in its hue, renders the picture weak instead of impressive, and unpleasant instead of awful. And indeed the management of nature might teach him this; for though, when using violent contrasts, she frequently makes her gloom somewhat monotonous, the moment she gives up her vivid color, and depends upon her desolation, that moment she begins to steal the greens into her sea-gray, and the browns and yellows into her cloud-gray, and the expression of variously tinted light through all. Nor is Mr. Fielding without a model in art, for the Land's End, and Lowestoffe, and Snowstorm, (in the Academy, 1842,) of Turner, are nothing more than passages of the most hopeless, desolate, uncontrasted grays, and yet are three of the very finest pieces of color that have come from his hand. And we sincerely hope that Mr. Fielding will gradually feel the necessity of such studied melodies of quiet color, and will neither fall back into the old tricks of contrast, nor continue to paint with purple and ink. If he will only make a few careful studies of gray from the mixed atmosphere of spray, rain, and mist of a gale that has been three days hard at work, not of a rainy squall, but of a persevering and powerful storm, and not where the sea is turned into milk and magnesia by a chalk coast, but where it breaks pure and green on gray slate or white granite, as along the cliffs of Cornwall, we think his pictures would present some of the finest examples of high intention and feeling to be found in modern art.

§ 10. Variety of the grays of nature.

The works of Stanfield evidently, and at all times, proceed from the hand of a man who has both thorough knowledge of his subject, and thorough acquaintance with all the means and principles of art. We never criticise them, because we feel, the moment we look carefully at the drawing of any single wave, that the

§ 11. Works of Stanfield. His perfect knowledge and power.

knowledge possessed by the master is much greater than our own, and therefore believe that if anything offends us in any part of the work, it is nearly certain to be our fault, and not the painter's. The local color of Stanfield's sea is singularly true and powerful, and entirely independent of any tricks of chiaroscuro. He will carry a mighty wave up against the sky, and make its whole body dark and substantial against the distant light, using all the while nothing more than chaste and unexaggerated local color to gain the relief. His surface is at once lustrous, transparent, and accurate to a hair-breadth in every curve; and he is entirely independent of dark skies, deep blues, driving spray, or any other means of concealing want of form, or atoning for it. He fears no difficulty, desires no assistance, takes his sea in open daylight, under general sunshine, and paints the *element* in its pure color and complete forms. But we wish that he were less powerful, and more interesting; or that he were a little less Diogenes-like, and did not scorn all that he does not want. Now that he has shown us what he can do without such aids, we wish he would show us what he can do with them. He is, as we have already said, wanting in what we have just been praising in Fielding—impressiveness. We should like him to be less clever, and more affecting—less wonderful, and more terrible; and as the very first step toward such an end, to learn how to conceal. We are, however, trenching upon matters with which we have at present nothing to do; our concern is now only with truth, and one work of Stanfield alone presents us with as much concentrated knowledge of sea and sky, as, diluted, would have lasted any one of the old masters his life. And let it be especially observed, how extensive and how varied is the truth of our modern masters—how it comprises a complete history of that nature of which, from the ancients, you only here and there can catch a stammering descriptive syllable—how Fielding has given us every character of the quiet lake, Robson * of the mountain tarn,

§ 12. But want of feeling. General sum of truth presented by modern art.

---

* I ought before to have alluded to the works of the late G. Robson They are a little disagreeable in execution, but there is a feeling of the

De Wint of the lowland river, Nesfield of the radiant cataract, Harding of the roaring torrent, Fielding of the desolate sea, Stanfield of the blue, open, boundless ocean. Arrange all this in your mind, observe the perfect truth of it in all its parts, compare it with the fragmentary falsities of the ancients, and then, come with me to Turner.

CHAPTER III.

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY TURNER.

§ 1. The difficulty of giving surface to smooth water.

I BELIEVE it is a result of the experience of all artists, that it is the easiest thing in the world to give a certain degree of depth and transparency to water; but that it is next thing to impossible, to give a full impression of surface. If no reflection be given—a ripple being supposed—the water looks like lead: if reflection be given, it in nine cases out of ten looks *morbidly* clear and deep, so that we always go down *into* it, even when the artist most wishes us to glide *over* it. Now, this difficulty arises from the very same circumstance which occasions the frequent failure in effect of the best drawn foregrounds, noticed in Section II. Chapter III., the change, namely, of focus necessary in the eye in order to receive rays of light coming from different distances. Go to the edge of a pond, in a perfectly calm day, at some place where there is duckweed floating on the surface,—not thick, but a leaf here and there. Now, you may either see in the water the reflection of the sky, or you may see the duckweed, but you cannot, by any effort, see both together. If you look for the reflection, you will be sensible of a sudden change or effort in the eye, by which it adapts itself to the reception of the rays which have come all the way from the clouds, have struck on the water, and so been sent up again to the eye. The focus you adopt is one

§ 2. Is dependent on the structure of the eye, and the focus by which the reflected rays are perceived.

character of *deep* calm water in them quite unequalled, and different from the works and thoughts of all other men.

fit for great distance; and, accordingly, you will feel that you are looking down a great way under the water, while the leaves of the duckweed, though they lie upon the water at the very spot on which you are gazing so intently, are felt only as a vague, uncertain interruption, causing a little confusion in the image below, but entirely indistinguishable as leaves,—and even their color unknown and unperceived. Unless you think of them, you will not even feel that anything interrupts your sight, so excessively slight is their effect. If, on the other hand, you make up your mind to look for the leaves of the duckweed, you will perceive an instantaneous change in the effort of the eye, by which it becomes adapted to receive near rays—those which have only come from the surface of the pond. You will then see the delicate leaves of the duckweed with perfect clearness, and in vivid green; but while you do so, you will be able to perceive nothing of the reflections in the very water on which they float—nothing but a vague flashing and melting of light and dark hues, without form or meaning, which, to investigate, or find out what they mean or are, you must quit your hold of the duckweed, and plunge down.

§ 3. Morbid clearness occasioned in painting of water by distinctness of reflections.

Hence it appears, that whenever we see plain reflections of comparatively distant objects, in near water, we cannot possibly see the surface, and *vice versa;* so that when in a painting we give the reflections with the same clearness with which they are visible in nature, we presuppose the effort of the eye to look under the surface, and, of course, destroy the surface, and induce an effect of clearness which, perhaps, the artist has not particularly wished to attain, but which he has found himself forced into, by his reflections, in spite of himself. And the reason of this effect of clearness appearing preternatural is, that people are not in the habit of looking at water with the distant focus adapted to the reflections, unless by particular effort. We invariably, under ordinary circumstances, use the surface focus; and, in consequence, receive nothing more than a vague and confused impression of the reflected colors and lines, however clearly, calmly, and vigorously all may be defined underneath, if we choose to look for them. We do not look for them, but glide along over the surface, catching only playing light and capricious color for evidence of reflection, except where we come to images of objects close to the surface, which the surface focus is of course adapted to receive; and these we see clearly, as of the weeds on the shore, or of sticks rising out of the water, etc. Hence, the ordinary effect of water is only to be rendered by giving the reflections of the *margin* clear and distinct (so clear they usually are in nature, that it is impossible to tell where the water begins;) but the moment we touch the reflection of distant objects, as of high trees or clouds, that instant we must become vague and uncertain in drawing, and, though vivid in color and light as the object itself, quite indistinct in form and feature.

§ 4. How avoided by Turner.

If we take such a piece of water as that in the foreground of Turner's Chateau of Prince Albert, the first impression from it is,—"What a wide *surface!*" We glide over it a quarter of a mile into the picture before we know where we are, and yet the water is as calm and crystalline as a mirror; but we are not allowed to tumble into it, and gasp for breath as we go down,—we are kept upon the surface, though that surface is flashing and radiant with every hue of cloud, and sun, and sky, and foliage. But the secret is in the drawing of these reflections.* We cannot tell when we look *at* them and *for* them, what they mean. They have all character, and are evidently reflections of something definite and determined; but yet they are all uncertain and inexplicable ; playing color and palpitating shade, which, though we recognize in an instant for images of something, and feel that the water is bright, and lovely, and calm, we cannot penetrate nor interpret : we are not allowed to go down to them, and we repose, as we should in nature, upon the lustre of the level surface. It is in this power of saying everything, and yet saying nothing too plainly, that the perfection of art here, as in all other cases, consists. But as it was before shown in Section II. Chap. III. that the focus of the eye required little alteration after the first half mile of distance, it is evident that on the *distant* surface of water, *all* reflections will be seen plainly ; for the same focus adapted to a moderate distance of surface will receive with distinctness rays coming from the sky, or from any other distance, however great. Thus we always see the reflection of Mont Blanc on the Lake of Geneva, whether we take pains to look for it or not, because the water upon which it is cast is itself a mile off ; but if we would see the reflection of Mont Blanc in the Lac de Chede, which is close to us, we must take some trouble about the matter, leave the green snakes swimming upon the surface, and plunge for it. Hence reflections, if viewed collectively, are always clear in proportion to the distance of the water on which they are cast. And now look at Turner's Ulleswater, or any of his distant lake expanses, and you will find every crag and line of the hills rendered in them with absolute fidelity, while the near surface shows nothing but a vague confusion of exquisite and lustrous tint. The reflections even of the clouds will be given far off, while those of near boats and figures will be confused and mixed among each other, except just at the water-line.

---

* Not altogether. I believe here, as in a former case, I have attributed far too much influence to this change of focus. In Turner's earlier works the principle is not found. In the rivers of the Yorkshire drawings, every reflection is given clearly, even to the farthest depth, and yet the surface is not lost, and it would deprive the painter of much power if he were not sometimes so to represent them, especially when his object is repose; it being, of course, as lawful for him to choose one adaptation of the sight as another. I have, however, left the above paragraphs as first written, because they are true, although I think they make too much of an unimportant matter. The reader may attribute to them such weight as he thinks fit. He is referred to § 11 of this chapter, and to § 4 of the first chapter of this section.

§ 5. All reflections on distant water are distinct.

And now we see what Vandevelde *ought* to have done with the shadow of his ship spoken of in the first chapter of this section. In such a calm, we should in nature, if we had looked for the reflection, have seen it clear from the water-line to the flag on the mainmast ; but in so doing, we should have appeared to ourselves to be looking under the water, and should have lost all feeling of

§ 6. The error of Vandevelde.

surface. When we looked at the surface of the sea,—as we naturally should,—we should have seen the image of the hull absolutely clear and perfect, because that image is cast on distant water; but we should have seen the image of the masts and sails gradually more confused as they descended, and the water close to us would have borne only upon its surface a maze of flashing color and indefinite hue. Had Vandevelde, therefore, given the perfect image of his ship, he would have represented a truth dependent on a particular effort of the eye, and destroyed his surface. But his business was to give, not a distinct reflection, but the colors of the reflection in mystery and disorder upon his near water, all perfectly vivid, but none intelligible; and had he done so, the eye would not have troubled itself to search them out; it would not have cared whence or how the colors came, but it would have felt them to be true and right, and rested satisfied upon the polished surface of the clear sea. Of the perfect truth, the best examples I can give are Turner's Saltash and Castle Upnor.

§ 7. Difference in arrangement of parts between the reflected object and its image.

Be it next observed that the reflection of all near objects is, by our fifth rule, not an exact copy of the parts of them which we see above the water, but a totally different view and arrangement of them, that which we should get if we were looking at them from beneath. Hence we see the dark sides of leaves hanging over a stream, in their reflection, though we see the light sides above, and all objects and groups of objects are thus seen in the reflection under different lights, and in different positions with respect to each other from those which they assume above; some which we see on the bank being entirely lost in their reflection, and others which we cannot see on the bank brought into view. Hence nature contrives never to repeat herself, and the surface of water is not a mockery, but a new view of what is above it. And this difference in what is represented, as well as the obscurity of the representation, is one of the chief sources by which the sensation of surface is kept up in the reality. The reflection is not so remarkable, it does not attract the eye in the same degree when it is entirely different from the images above, as when it mocks them and repeats them, and we feel that the space and surface have color and character of their own, and that the bank is one thing and the water another. It is by not making this change manifest, and giving underneath a mere duplicate of what is seen above, that artists are apt to destroy the essence and substance of water, and to drop us through it.

§ 8. Illustrated from the works of Turner.

Now one instance will be sufficient to show the exquisite care of Turner in this respect. On the left-hand side of his Nottingham, the water (a smooth canal) is terminated by a bank fenced up with wood, on which, just at the edge of the water, stands a white sign-post. A quarter of a mile back, the hill on which Nottingham Castle stands rises steeply nearly to the top of the picture. The upper part of this hill is in bright golden light, and the lower in very deep gray shadow, against which the white board of the sign-post is seen entirely in light relief, though, being turned from the light, it is itself in delicate middle tint, illumined only on the edge. But the image of all this in the canal is very different. First, we have the reflection of the piles of the bank, sharp and clear, but under this we have not what we see above it, the dark *base* of the hill, (for this being a quarter of a mile back, we could not see over the fence if we were looking from below,) but the golden summit of the hill, the shadow of the under part having no record nor place in the reflection. But this summit, being very distant, cannot be seen clearly by the eye while its focus is adapted to the surface of the water, and accordingly its reflection is entirely vague and confused ; you cannot tell what it is meant for, it is mere playing golden light. But the sign-post, being on the bank close to us, will be reflected clearly, and accordingly its distinct image is seen in the midst of this confusion. But it now is relieved, not against the dark base, but against the illumined summit of the hill, and it appears, therefore, instead of a white space thrown out from blue shade, a dark gray space thrown out from golden light. I do not know that any more magnificent example could be given of concentrated knowledge, or of the daring statement of most difficult truth. For who but this consummate artist would have had courage, even if he had perceived the laws which required it, to undertake in a single small space of water, the painting of an entirely new picture, with all its tones and arrangements altered,—what was made above bright by opposition to blue, being underneath made cool and dark by opposition to gold;—or would have dared to contradict so boldly the ordinary expectation of the uncultivated eye, to find in the reflection a mockery for the reality? But the reward is immediate, for not only is the change most grateful to the eye, and most exquisite as composition, but the surface of the water in consequence of it is felt to be as spacious as it is clear, and the eye rests not on the inverted image of the material objects, but on the element which receives them. And we have a further instance in this passage of the close study which is required to enjoy the works of Turner, for another artist might have altered the reflection or confused it, but he would not have reasoned upon it so as to find out *what the exact alteration must be*; and if we had tried to account for the reflection, we should have found it false or inaccurate. But the master mind of Turner, without effort, showers its knowledge into every touch, and we have only to trace out even his slightest passages, part by part, to find in them the universal working of the deepest thought, that consistency of every minor truth which admits of and invites the same ceaseless study as the work of nature herself.

§ 9. The boldness and judgment shown in the observance of it.

There is, however, yet another peculiarity in Turner's painting of smooth water, which, though less deserving of admiration, as being merely a mechanical excellence, is not less wonderful than its other qualities, nor less unique—a peculiar texture, namely, given to the most delicate tints of the surface, when there is little reflection from anything except sky or atmosphere, and which, just at the points where other painters are reduced to paper, gives to the surface of Turner the

§ 10. The *texture* of surface in Turner's painting of calm water.

greatest appearance of substantial liquidity. It is impossible to say how it is produced ; it looks like some modification of body color ; but it certainly is not body color used as by other men, for I have seen this expedient tried over and over again without success ; and it is often accompanied by crumbling touches of a dry brush, which never could have been put upon body color, and which could not have shown through underneath it. As a piece of mechanical excellence, it is one of the most remarkable things in the works of the master ; and it brings the truth of his water-painting up to the last degree of perfection, often rendering those passages of it the most attractive and delightful, which from their delicacy and paleness of tint, would have been weak and papery in the hands of any other man. The best instance of it I can give, is, I think, the distance of the Devonport with the Dockyards.

§ 11. Its united qualities.

After all, however, there is more in Turner's painting of water surface than any philosophy of reflection, or any peculiarity of means, can account for or accomplish ; there is a might and wonder about it which will not admit of our whys or hows. Take, for instance, the picture of the Sun of Venice going to Sea, of 1843, respecting which, however, there are one or two circumstances which may as well be noted besides its water-painting. The reader, if he has not been at Venice, ought to be made aware that the Venetian fishing-boats, almost without exception, carry canvas painted with bright colors, the favorite design for the centre being either a cross or a large sun with many rays, the favorite colors being red, orange, and black, blue occurring occasionally. The radiance of these sails and of the bright and grotesque vanes at the mast-heads under sunlight is beyond all painting, but it is strange that, of constant occurrence as these boats are on all the lagoons, Turner alone should have availed himself of them. Nothing could be more faithful than the boat which was the principal object in this picture, in the cut of the sail, the filling of it, the exact height of the boom above the deck, the quartering of it with color, finally and especially, the hanging of the fish-baskets about the bows. All these, however, are comparatively minor merits, (though not the blaze of color which the artist elicited from the right use of these circumstances,) but the peculiar power of the picture was the painting of the sea surface, where there were no reflections to assist it. A stream of splendid color fell from the boat, but that occupied the centre only; in the distance, the city and crowded boats threw down some playing lines, but these still left on each side of the boat a large space of water reflecting nothing but the morning sky. This was divided by an eddying swell, on whose continuous sides the local color of the water was seen, pure aquamarine, (a beautiful occurrence of closely-observed truth,) but still there remained a large blank space of pale water to be treated, the sky above had no distinct details and was pure faint gray, with broken white vestiges of cloud: it gave no help therefore. But there the water lay, no dead gray flat paint, but downright clear, playing, palpable surface, full of indefinite hue, and retiring as regularly and visibly back and far away, as if there had been objects all over it to tell the story by perspective. Now it is the doing of this which tries the painter, and it is his having done this which made me say above that "no man had ever painted the surface of calm water but Turner." The San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina, contained a similar passage, equally fine; in one of the Canale della Guidecca the specific green color of the water is seen in front, with the shadows of the boats thrown on it in purple; all, as it retires, passing into the pure reflective blue.

§ 12. Relation of various circumstances of past agitation, etc., by the most trifling incidents, as in the Cowes.

But Turner is not satisfied with this. He is never altogether content unless he can, at the same time that he takes advantage of all the placidity of repose, tell us something either about the past commotion of the water, or of some present stirring of tide or current which its stillness does not show, or give us something or other to think about and reason upon, as well as to look at. Take a few instances. His Cowes, Isle of Wight, is a summer twilight about half an hour, or more, after sunset. Intensity of repose is the great aim throughout, and the unity of tone of the picture is one of the finest things that Turner has ever done. But there is not only quietness, there is the very deepest solemnity in the whole of the light, as well as in the stillness of the vessels ; and Turner wishes to enhance this feeling by representing not only repose, but *power* in repose, the emblem, in the sea, of the quiet ships of war. Accordingly, he takes the greatest possible pains to get his surface polished, calm, and smooth, but he indicates the reflection of a buoy, floating a full quarter of a mile off, by three black strokes with wide intervals between them, the last of which touches the water within twenty yards of the spectator. Now these three reflections can only indicate the farther sides of three rises of an enormous swell, and give by their intervals of separation, a space of from twelve to twenty yards for the breadth of each wave, including the sweep between them, and this swell is farther indicated by the reflection of the new moon falling, in a wide zigzag line. The exceeding majesty which this single circumstance gives to the whole picture, the sublime sensation of power and knowledge of former exertion which we instantly receive from it, if we have but acquaintance with nature enough to understand its language, render this work not only a piece of the most refined truth, (as which I have at present named it,) but to my mind, one of the highest pieces of intellectual art existing.

§ 13. In scenes on the Loire and Seine.

Again, in the scene on the Loire, with the square precipice and fiery sunset, in the Rivers of France, repose has been aimed at in the same way, and most thoroughly given ; but the immense width of the river at this spot makes it look like a lake or sea, and it was therefore necessary that we should be made thoroughly to understand and feel that this is not the calm of still water, but the tranquillity of a majestic current. Accordingly, a boat swings at anchor on the right ; and the stream, dividing at its bow, flows towards us in two long, dark waves, especial attention to which is enforced by the one on the left being brought across the reflected stream of sunshine, which it separates, and which is broken in the nearer water by the general undulation and agitation caused by the boat's wake; a wake caused by the waters passing it, not by *its* going through the water.

§ 14. Expression of contrary waves caused by recoil from shore.

Again, in the Confluence of the Seine and Marne, we have the repose of the wide river stirred by the paddles of the steamboat, (whose plashing we can almost hear, for we are especially compelled to look at them by their being made the central note of the composition—the blackest object in it, opposed to the strongest light,) and this disturbance is not merely caused by the two lines of surge from the boat's wake, for any other painter must have given these, but Turner never rests satisfied till he has told you *all* in his power; and he has not only given the receding surges, but these have gone on to the shore, have struck upon it, and been beaten back from it in another line of weaker contrary surges, whose point of intersection with those of the wake itself is marked by the sudden subdivision and disorder of the waves of the wake on the extreme left, and whose reverted direction is exquisitely given where their lines cross the calm water, close to the spectator, and marked also by the sudden vertical spring of the spray just where they intersect the swell from the boat; and in order that we may fully be able to account for these reverted waves, we are allowed, just at the extreme right-hand limit of the picture, to see the point where the swell from the boat meets the shore. In the Chaise de Gargantua we have the still water lulled by the dead calm which usually precedes the most violent storms, suddenly broken upon by a tremendous burst of wind from the gathered thunder-clouds, scattering the boats, and raising the water into rage, except where it is sheltered by the hills. In the Jumieges and Vernon we have farther instances of local agitation, caused, in the one instance, by a steamer, in the other, by the large water-wheels under the bridge, not, observe, a mere splashing about the wheel itself, this is too far off to be noticeable, so that we should not have even known that the objects be-

§ 15. Various other instances.

neath the bridge were water-wheels, but for the agitation recorded a quarter of a mile down the river, where its current crosses the sunlight. And thus there will scarcely ever be found a piece of quiet water by Turner, without some story in it of one kind or another; sometimes a slight, but beautiful incident—oftener, as in the Cowes, something on which the whole sentiment and intention of the picture in a great degree depends; but invariably presenting some new instance of varied knowledge and observation, some fresh appeal to the highest faculties of the mind.

§ 16. Turner's painting of distant expanses of water. Calm, interrupted by ripple.

Of extended surfaces of water, as rendered by Turner, the Loch Katrine and Derwent-water, of the Illustrations to Scott, and the Loch Lomond, vignette in Rogers's Poems, are characteristic instances. The first of these gives us the most distant part of the lake entirely under the influence of a light breeze, and therefore entirely without reflections of the objects on its borders; but the whole near half is untouched by the wind, and on that is cast the image of the upper part of Ben-Venue and of the islands. The second gives us the surface, with just so much motion upon it as to prolong, but not to destroy, the reflections of the dark woods,—reflections only interrupted by the ripple of the boat's wake. And the third gives us an example of the whole surface so much affected by ripple as to bring into exercise all those laws which we have seen so grossly violated by Canaletto. We see in the nearest boat that though the lines of the gunwale are much blacker and more conspicuous than that of the cutwater, yet the gunwale lines, being nearly horizontal, have no reflection whatsoever; while the line of the cutwater, being vertical, has a distinct reflection of three times its own length. But even these tremulous reflections are only visible as far as the islands; beyond them, as the lake retires into distance, we find it receives only the reflection of the gray light from the clouds, and runs in one flat white field up between the hills; and besides all this, we have another phenomenon, quite new, given to us,—the brilliant gleam of light along the centre of the lake.

§ 17. And ripple, crossed by sunshine.

This is not caused by ripple, for it is cast on a surface rippled all over; but it is what we could not have without ripple,—the light of a passage of sunshine. I have already (Chap. I., § 9) explained the cause of this phenomenon, which never can by any possibility take place on calm water, being the multitudinous reflection of the sun from the sides of the ripples, causing an appearance of local light and shadow; and being dependent, like real light and shadow, on the passage of the clouds, though the dark parts of the water are the reflections of the clouds, not the shadows of them; and the bright parts are the reflections of the sun, and not the light of it. This little vignette, then, will entirely complete the system of Turner's universal truth in quiet water. We have seen every phenomenon given by him,—the clear reflection, the prolonged reflection, the reflection broken by ripple, and finally the ripple broken by light and shade; and it is especially to be observed how careful he is, in this last case, when he uses the apparent light and shade, to account for it by showing us in the whiteness of the lake beyond, its universal subjection to ripple.

§ 18. His drawing of distant rivers.

We have not spoken of Turner's magnificent drawing of distant rivers, which, however, is dependent only on more complicated application of the same laws, with exquisite perspective. The sweeps of river in the Dryburgh, (Illustrations to Scott,) and Melrose, are bold and characteristic examples, as well as the Rouen from St. Catherine's Hill, and the Caudebec, in the Rivers of France. The only thing which in these works requires particular attention, is the care with which the height of the observer above the river is indicated by the loss of the reflections of its banks. This is, perhaps, shown most clearly in the Caudebec. If we had been on a level with the river, its whole surface would have been darkened by the reflection of the steep and high banks; but being far above it, we can see no more of the image than we could of the hill itself, if it were actually reversed under the water; and therefore we see that Turner gives us only a narrow line of dark water, immediately under the precipice, the broad surface reflecting only the sky. This is also finely shown on the left-hand side of the Dryburgh.

§ 19. And of surface associated with mist.

But all these early works of the artist have been eclipsed by some recent drawings of Switzerland. These latter are not to be described by any words, but they must be noted here not only as presenting records of lake effect on grander scale, and of more imaginative character than any other of his works, but as combining effects of the surface of mist with the surface of water. Two or three of the Lake of Lucerne, seen from above, give the melting of the mountain promontories beneath into the clear depth, and above into the clouds ; one of Constance shows the vast lake at evening, seen not as water, but its surface covered with low white mist, lying league beyond league in the twilight like a fallen space of moony cloud ; one of Goldau shows the Lake of Zug appearing through the chasm of a thunder-cloud under sunset, its whole surface one blaze of fire, and the promontories of the hills thrown out against it, like spectres ; another of Zurich gives the playing of the green waves of the river among white streams of moonlight : two purple sunsets on the Lake of Zug are distinguished for the glow obtained without positive color, the rose and purple tints being in great measure brought by opposition out of browns : finally, a drawing executed in 1845 of the town of Lucerne from the lake is unique for its expression of water surface reflecting the clear green hue of sky at twilight.

§ 20. His drawing of falling water, with peculiar expression of weight.

It will be remembered that it was said above, that Turner was the only painter who had ever represented the surface of calm or the *force* of agitated water. He obtains this expression of force in falling or running water by fearless and full rendering of its forms. He never loses himself and his subject in the splash of the fall—his presence of mind never fails as he goes down ; he does not blind us with the spray, or veil the countenance of his fall with its own drapery. A little crumbling white, or lightly rubbed paper, will soon give the effect of indiscriminate foam ; but nature gives more than foam—she shows beneath it, and through it, a peculiar character of exquisitely studied form bestowed on every wave and line of fall; and it is this variety of definite character which Turner always aims at rejecting, as much as possible, everything that conceals or overwhelms it. Thus, in the Upper Fall of the Tees, though the whole basin of the fall is blue and dim with the rising vapor, yet the whole attention of the spectator is directed to that which it was peculiarly difficult to render, the concentric zones and delicate curves of the falling water itself; and it is impossible to express with what exquisite accuracy these are given. They are the characteristic of a powerful stream descending without impediment or break, but from a narrow channel, so as to expand as it falls. They are the constant form which such a stream assumes as it descends; and yet I think it would be difficult to point to another instance of their being rendered in art. You will find nothing in the waterfalls even of our best painters, but springing lines of parabolic descent, and splashing, shapeless foam; and, in consequence, though they make you understand the swiftness of the water, they never let you feel the weight of it; the stream in their hands looks *active*, not *supine*, as if it leaped, not as if it fell. Now water will leap a little way, it will leap down a weir or over a stone, but it *tumbles* over a high fall like this; and it is when we have lost the parabolic line, and arrived at the catenary,—when he have lost the *spring* of the fall, and arrived at the *plunge* of it, that we begin really to feel its weight and wildness. Where water takes its first leap from the top, it is cool, and collected, and uninteresting, and mathematical, but it is when it finds that it has got into a scrape, and has farther to go than it thought for, that its character comes out; it is then that it begins to writhe, and twist, and sweep out zone after zone in wilder stretching as it falls, and to send down the rocket-like, lance-pointed, whizzing shafts at its sides, sounding for the bottom. And it is this prostration, this hopeless abandonment of its ponderous power to the air, which is always peculiarly expressed by Turner, and especially in the case before us; while

§ 21. The abandonment and plunge of great cataracts. How given by him.

our other artists, keeping to the parabolic line, where they do not lose themselves in smoke and foam, make their cataract look muscular and wiry, and may consider themselves fortunate if they can keep it from stopping. I believe the majesty of motion which Turner has given by these concentric catenary lines must be felt even by those who have never seen a high waterfall, and therefore cannot appreciate their exquisite fidelity to nature.

In the Chain Bridge over the Tees, this passiveness and swinging of the water to and fro are yet more remarkable; while we have another characteristic of a great waterfall given to us, that the wind, in this instance coming up the valley against the current, takes the spray up off the edges, and carries it back in little torn, reverted rags and threads, seen in delicate form against the darkness on the left. But we must understand a little more about the nature of running water before we can appreciate the drawing either of this, or any other of Turner's torrents.

§ 22. Difference in the action of water, when continuous and when interrupted. The interrupted stream fills the hollows of its bed.

When water, not in very great body, runs in a rocky bed much interrupted by hollows, so that it can rest every now and then in a pool as it goes along, it does not acquire a continuous velocity of motion. It pauses after every leap, and curdles about, and rests a little, and then goes on again; and if in this comparatively tranquil and rational state of mind it meets with an obstacle, as a rock or stone, it parts on each side of it with a little bubbling foam, and goes round; if it comes to a step in its bed, it leaps it lightly, and then after a little plashing at the bottom, stops again to take breath. But if its bed be on a continuous slope, not much interrupted by hollows, so that it cannot rest, or if its own mass be so increased by flood that its usual resting-places are not sufficient for it, but that it is perpetually pushed out of them by the following current, before it has had time to tranquillize itself, it of course gains velocity with every yard that it runs; the impetus got at one leap is carried to the credit of the next, until the whole stream becomes one mass of unchecked, accelerating motion. Now when water in this state comes to an obstacle, it does not part at it, but clears it, like a race-horse ; and when it comes to a hollow, it does not fill it up and run out leisurely at the other side, but it rushes down into it and comes up again on the other side, as a ship into the hollow of the sea. Hence the whole appearance of the bed of the stream is changed, and all the lines of the water altered in their nature. The quiet stream is a succession of leaps and pools ; the leaps are light and springy, and parabolic, and make a great deal of splashing when they tumble into the pool ; then we have a space of quiet curdling water, and another similar leap below. But the stream when it has gained an impetus takes the shape of its bed, never stops, is equally deep and equally swift everywhere, goes down into every hollow, not with a leap, but with a swing, not foaming, nor splashing, but in the bending line of a strong sea-wave, and comes up again on the other side, over rock and ridge, with the ease of a bounding leopard ; if it meet a rock three or four feet above the level of its bed, it will neither part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clear it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, coming down again as smoothly on the other side ; the whole surface of the surge being drawn into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, but foamless, except in places where the form of the bed opposes itself at some direct angle to such a line of fall, and causes a breaker ; so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea, with this only difference, that the torrent-waves always break backwards, and sea-waves forwards.

§ 23. But the continuous stream takes the shape of its bed.

§ 24. Its exquisite curved lines.

Thus, then, in the water which has gained an impetus, we have the most exquisite arrangements of curved lines, perpetually changing from convex to concave, and *vice versa*, following every swell and hollow of the bed with their modulating grace, and all in unison of motion, presenting perhaps the most beautiful series of inorganic forms which nature can possibly produce ; for the sea runs too much into similar and concave curves with sharp edges, but every motion of the torrent is united, and all its curves are modifications of beautiful line.

We see, therefore, why Turner seizes on these curved lines of the torrent, not only as being among the most beautiful forms of nature, but because they are an instant expression of the utmost power and velocity, and tell us how the torrent has been flowing before we see it. For the leap and splash might be seen in the sudden freakishness of a quiet stream, or the fall of a rivulet over a mill-dam; but the undulating line is the *exclusive* attribute of the mountain torrent,* whose fall and fury have made the valleys echo for miles; and thus the moment we see one of its curves over a stone in the foreground, we know how far it has come, and how fiercely. And in the drawing we have been speaking of, the lower fall of the Tees, in the foreground of the Killiecrankie and Rhymer's Glen, and of the St. Maurice, in Rogers's Italy, we shall find the most exquisite instances of the use of such lines; but the most perfect of all in the Llanthony Abbey, which may be considered as the standard of torrent-drawing. The chief light of the picture

§ 25. Turner's careful choice of the historical truth.

§ 26. His exquisite drawing of the continuous torrent in the Llanthony Abbey.

---

* On a large scale it is so, but the same lines are to be seen for the moment whenever water becomes exceedingly rapid, and yet feels the bottom as it passes, being not thrown up or cast clear of it. In general, the drawing of water fails from being too interrupted, the forms flung hither and thither, and broken up and covered with bright touches, instead of being wrought out in their real unities of curvature. It is difficult enough to draw a curved surface, even when it is rough and has texture; but to indicate the varied and sweeping forms of a crystalline and polished substance, requires far more skill and patience than most artists possess. In some respects, it is impossible. I do not suppose any means of art are capable of rightly expressing the smooth, multitudinous rippling of a rapid rivulet of shallow water, giving its transparency lustre and fully-developed forms; and the greater number of the lines and actions of torrent-waves are equally inexpressible. The effort should, nevertheless, always be made, and whatever is sacrificed in color, freedom, or brightness, the real contours ought always in some measure to be drawn, as a careful draughtsman secures those of flesh, or any other finely-modelled surface. It is better, in many respects, the drawing should miss of being *like* water, than that it should miss in this one respect the grandeur of water. Many tricks of scratching and dashing will bring out a deceptive resemblance; the determined and laborious rendering of contour alone secures sublimity.

here falls upon the surface of the stream, swelled by recent rain, and its mighty waves come rolling down close to the spectator, green and clear, but pale with anger, in gigantic, unbroken, oceanic curves, bending into each other without break or foam, though jets of fiery spray are cast into the air along the rocky shore, and rise in the sunshine in dusty vapor. The whole surface is one united race of mad motion ; all the waves dragged, as I have described, into lines and furrows by their swiftness, and every one of these fine forms is drawn with the most studied chiaroscuro of delicate color, grays and greens, as silvery and pure as the finest passages of Paul Veronese, and with a refinement of execution which the eye strains itself in looking into. The rapidity and gigantic force of this torrent, the exquisite refinement of its color, and the vividness of foam which is obtained through a general middle tint, render it about the most perfect piece of painting of running water in existence.

§ 27. And of the interrupted torrent in the Mercury and Argus.

Now this picture is, as was noticed in our former reference to it, full of expression of every kind of motion : the clouds are in wild haste ; the sun is gleaming fast and fitfully through the leaves ; the rain drifting away along the hill-side ; and the torrent, the principal object, to complete the impression, is made the wildest thing of all, and not only wild before us, and with us, but bearing with it in its every motion, from its long course, the record of its rage. Observe how differently Turner uses his torrent when the spirit of the picture is repose. In the Mercury and Argus, we have also a stream in the foreground ; but, in coming down to us, we see it stopping twice in two quiet and glassy pools, upon which the drinking cattle cast an unstirred image. From the nearest of these, the water leaps in three cascades into another basin close to us ; it trickles in silver threads through the leaves at its edge, and falls tinkling and splashing (though in considerable body) into the pool, stirring its quiet surface, at which a bird is stooping to drink, with concentric and curdling ripples which divide round the stone at its farthest border, and descend in sparkling foam over the lip of the basin. Thus we find, in every case, the system of Turner's truth entirely unbroken, each phase and phenomenon of nature being recorded exactly where it is most valuable and impressive.

§ 28. Various cases.

We have not, however, space to follow out the variety of his torrent-drawing. The above two examples are characteristic of the two great divisions or classes of torrents—that whose motion is continuous, and whose motion is interrupted: all drawing of running water will resolve itself into the representation of one or other of these. The descent of the distant stream in the vignette to the Boy of Egremond is slight, but very striking; and the Junction of the Greta and Tees, a singular instance of the bold drawing of the complicated forms of a shallow stream among multitudinous rocks. A still finer example occurs in a recent drawing of Dazio Grande, on the St. Gothard, the waves of the Toccia, clear and blue, fretting among the granite débris which were brought down by the storm that destroyed the whole road. In the Ivy bridge the subject is the rest of the torrent in a pool among fallen rocks, the forms of the stones are seen through the clear brown water, and their reflections mingle with those of the foliage.

§ 29. Sea painting. Impossibility of truly representing foam.

More determined efforts have at all periods been made in sea painting than in torrent painting, yet less successful. As above stated, it is easy to obtain a resemblance of broken running water by tricks and dexterities, but the sea *must* be legitimately drawn; it cannot be given as utterly disorganized and confused, its weight and mass must be expressed, and the efforts at expression of it end in failure with all but the most powerful men; even with these few a partial success must be considered worthy of the highest praise.

As the right rendering of the Alps depends on power of drawing snow, so the right painting of the sea must depend, at least in all coast scenery, in no small measure on the power of drawing foam. Yet there are two conditions of foam of invariable occurrence on breaking waves, of which I have never seen the slightest record attempted; first the thick creamy curdling overlapping massy form which remains for a moment only after the fall of the wave, and is seen in perfection in its running up the beach; and secondly, the thin white coating into which this subsides, which opens into oval gaps and clefts, marbling the waves over their whole surface, and connecting the breakers on a flat shore by long dragging streams of white.

It is evident that the difficulty of expressing either of these two conditions must be immense. The lapping and curdling form is difficult enough to catch even when the lines of its undulation alone are considered; but the lips, so to speak, which lie along these lines, are full, projecting, and marked by beautiful light and shade; each has its high light, a gradation into shadow of indescribable delicacy, a bright reflected light and a dark cast shadow; to draw all this requires labor, and care, and firmness of work, which, as I imagine, must always, however skilfully bestowed, destroy all impression of wildness, accidentalism, and evanescence, and so kill the sea. Again, the openings in the thin subsided foam in their irregular modifications of circular and oval shapes dragged hither and thither, would be hard enough to draw even if they could be seen on a flat surface; instead of which, every one of the openings is seen in undulation on a tossing surface, broken up over small surges and ripples, and so thrown into perspectives of the most hopeless intricacy. Now it is not easy to express the lie of a pattern with oval openings on the folds of drapery. I do not know that any one under the mark of Veronese or Titian could even do this as it ought to be done, yet in drapery much stiffness and error may be overlooked; not so in sea,—the slightest inaccuracy, the slightest want of flow and freedom in the line, is attached by the eye in a moment of high treason, and I believe success to be impossible.

Yet there is not a wave or any violently agitated sea on which both these forms do not appear,—the latter especially, after some time of storm, extends over their whole surfaces; the reader sees, therefore, why I said that sea could only be painted by means of more or less dexterous conventionalisms, since two of its most enduring phenomena cannot be represented at all.

Again, as respects the form of breakers on an even shore, there is difficulty of no less formidable kind. There is in them an irreconcilable mixture of fury and formalism. Their hollow surface is marked by parallel lines, like those of a smooth mill-weir, and graduated by reflected and transmitted lights of the most wonderful intricacy, its curve being at the same time necessarily of mathematical purity and precision ; yet at the top of this curve, when it nods over, there is a sudden laxity and giving way, the water swings and jumps along the ridge like a shaken chain, and the motion runs from part to part as it does through a serpent's body. Then the wind is at work on the extreme edge, and instead of letting it fling itself off naturally, it supports it, and drives it back, or scrapes it off, and carries it bodily away ; so that the spray at the top is in a continual transition between forms projected by their own weight, and forms blown and carried off with their weight overcome ; then at last, when it has come down, who shall say what shape that may be called, which shape has none of the great crash where it touches the beach.

§ 30. Character of shore-breakers, also inexpressible.

I think it is that last crash which is the great taskmaster. Nobody can do anything with it. I have seen Copley Fielding come very close to the jerk and nod of the lifted threatening edge, curl it very successfully, and without any look of its having been in papers, down nearly to the beach, but the final fall has no thunder in it. Turner has tried hard for it once or twice, but it will not do. The moment is given in the Sidon of the Bible Illustrations, and more elaborately in a painting of Bamborough ; in both these cases there is little foam at the bottom, and the fallen breaker looks like a wall, yet grand always ; and in the latter picture very beautifully assisted in expression by the tossing of a piece of cable, which some figures are dragging ashore, and which the breaker flings into the air as it falls. Perhaps the most successful rendering of the forms was in the Hero and Leander, but there the drawing was rendered easier by the powerful effect of light which disguised the foam.

It is not, however, from the shore that Turner usually studres his sea. Seen from the land, the curl of the breakers, even in nature, is somewhat uniform and monotonous; the size of the waves out at sea is uncomprehended, and those nearer the eye seem to succeed and resemble each other, to move slowly to the beach, and to break in the same lines and forms.

§ 31. Their effect, how injured when seen from the shore.

Afloat even twenty yards from the shore, we receive a totally different impression. Every wave around us appears vast—every one different from all the rest—and the breakers present, now that we see them with their backs towards us, the grand, extended, and varied lines of long curvature, which are peculiarly expressive both of velocity and power. Recklessness, before unfelt, is manifested in the mad, perpetual, changeful, undirected motion, not of wave after wave, as it appears from the shore, but of the very same water rising and falling. Of waves that successively approach and break, each appears to the mind a separate individual, whose part being performed, it perishes, and is succeeded by another; and there is nothing in this to impress us with the idea of restlessness, any more than in any successive and continuous functions of life and death. But it is when we perceive that it is no succession of wave, but the same water constantly rising, and crashing, and recoiling, and rolling in again in new forms and with fresh fury, that we perceive the perturbed spirit, and feel the intensity of its unwearied rage. The sensation of power is also trebled; for not only is the vastness of apparent size much increased, but the whole action is different; it is not a passive wave rolling sleepily forward until it tumbles heavily, prostrated upon the beach, but a sweeping exertion of tremendous and living strength, which does not now appear to *fall*, but to *burst* upon the shore; which never perishes, but recoils and recovers.

§ 32. Turner's expression of heavy rolling sea.

Aiming at these grand characters of the Sea, Turner almost always places the spectator, not on the shore, but twenty or thirty yards from it, beyond the first range of the breakers, as in the Land's End, Fowey, Dunbar, and Laugharne. The latter has been well engraved, and may be taken as a standard of the expression of fitfulness and power. The grand division of the whole space of the sea by a few dark continuous furrows of tremendous swell, (the breaking of one of which alone has strewed the rocks in front with ruin,) furnishes us with an estimate of space and strength, which at once reduces the men upon the shore to insects ; and yet through this terrific simplicity there is indicated a fitfulness and fury in the tossing of the individual lines, which give to the whole sea a wild, unwearied, reckless incoherency, like that of an enraged multitude, whose masses act together in frenzy, while not one individual feels as another. Especial attention is to be directed to the flatness of all the lines, for the same principle holds in sea which we have seen in mountains. All the size and sublimity of nature are given not by the height, but by the breadth of her masses : and Turner, by following her in her sweeping lines, while he does not lose the elevation of its surges, adds in a tenfold degree to their power : farther, observe the peculiar expression of *weight* which there is in Turner's waves, precisely of the same kind which we saw in his waterfall. We have not a cutting, springing, elastic line—no jumping or leaping in the waves : *that* is the characteristic of Chelsea Reach or Hampstead Ponds in a storm. But the surges roll and plunge with such prostration and hurling of their mass against the shore, that we feel the rocks are shaking under them ; and, to add yet more to this impression, observe how little, comparatively, they are broken by the wind ; above the floating wood, and along the shore, we have indication of a line of torn spray ; but it is a mere fringe along the ridge of the surge—no interference with its gigantic body. The wind has no power over its tremendous unity of force and weight. Finally, observe how, on the rocks on the left, the violence and swiftness of the rising wave are indicated by precisely the same lines which we saw were indicative of fury in the torrent. The water on these rocks is the body of the wave which has just broken, rushing up over them ; and in doing so, like the torrent, it does not break, nor foam, nor part upon the rock, but accommodates itself to every one of its swells and hollows, with undulating lines,

§ 33. With peculiar expression of weight.

whose grace and variety might alone serve us for a day's study; and it is only where two streams of this rushing water meet in the hollow of the rock, that their force is shown by the vertical bound of the spray.

In the distance of this grand picture, there are two waves which entirely depart from the principle observed by all the rest, and spring high into the air. They have a message for us which it is important that we should understand. Their leap is not a preparation for breaking, neither is it caused by their meeting with a rock. It is caused by their encounter with the recoil of the preceding wave. When a large surge, in the act of breaking, just as it curls over, is hurled against the face either of a wall or of a vertical rock, the sound of the blow is not a crash nor a roar; it is a report as loud as, and in every respect similar to, that of a great gun, and the wave is dashed back from the rock with force scarcely diminished, but reversed in direction,—it now recedes from the shore, and at the instant that it encounters the following breaker, the result is the vertical bound of both which is here rendered by Turner. Such a recoiling wave will proceed out to sea through ten or twelve ranges of following breakers, before it is overpowered. The effect of the encounter is more completely and palpably given in the Quilleboeuf, in the Rivers of France. It is peculiarly instructive here, as informing us of the nature of the coast, and the force of the waves, far more clearly than any spray about the rocks themselves could have done. But the effect of the blow at the shore itself is given in the Land's End, and vignette to Lycidas. Under favorable circumstances, with an advancing tide under a heavy gale, where the breakers feel the shore underneath them a moment before they touch the rock, so as to nod over when they strike, the effect is nearly incredible except to an eye-witness. I have seen the whole body of the wave rise in one white, vertical, broad fountain, eighty feet above the sea, half of it beaten so fine as to be borne away by the wind, the rest turning in the air when exhausted, and falling back with a weight and crash like

§ 34. Peculiar action of recoiling waves.

§ 35. And of the stroke of a breaker on the shore.

that of an enormous waterfall. This is given most completely in the Lycidas, and the blow of a less violent wave among broken rocks, not meeting it with an absolute wall, along the shore of the Land's End. This last picture is a study of sea whose whole organization has been broken up by constant recoils from a rocky coast. The Laugharne gives the surge and weight of the ocean in a gale, on a comparatively level shore; but the Land's End, the entire disorder of the surges when every one of them, divided and entangled among promontories as it rolls in, and beaten back part by part from walls of rock on this side and that side, recoils like the defeated division of a great army, throwing all behind it into disorder, breaking up the succeeding waves into vertical ridges, which in their turn, yet more totally shattered upon the shore, retire in more hopeless confusion, until the whole surface of the sea becomes one dizzy whirl of rushing, writhing, tortured, undirected rage, bounding, and crashing, and coiling in an anarchy of enormous power, subdivided into myriads of waves, of which every one is not, be it remembered, a separate surge, but part and portion of a vast one, actuated by internal power, and giving in every direction the mighty undulation of impetuous line which glides over the rocks and writhes in the wind, overwhelming the one, and piercing the other with the form, fury, and swiftness of a sheet of lambent fire. And throughout the rendering of all this, there is not one false curve given, not one which is not the perfect expression of visible motion; and the forms of the infinite sea are drawn throughout with that utmost mastery of art which, through the deepest study of every line, makes every line appear the wildest child of chance, while yet each is in itself a subject and a picture different from all else around. Of the color of this magnificent sea I have before spoken; it is a solemn green gray, (with its foam seen dimly through the darkness of twilight,) modulated with the fulness, changefulness, and sadness of a deep, wild melody.

§ 36. General character of sea on a rocky coast given by Turner in the Land's End.

The greater number of Turner's paintings of open sea be long to a somewhat earlier period than these drawings ; nor, generally speaking, are they of equal value. It appears to me that the artist had at that time either less knowledge of, or less delight in, the characteristics of deep water than of coast sea, and that, in consequence, he suffered himself to be influenced by some of the qualities of the Dutch sea-painters. In particular, he borrowed from them the habit of casting a dark shadow on the near waves, so as to bring out a stream of light behind ; and though he did this in a more legitimate way than they, that is to say, expressing the light by touches on the foam, and indicating the shadow as cast on foamy surface, still the habit has induced much feebleness and conventionality in the pictures of the period. His drawing of the waves was also somewhat petty and divided, small forms covered with white flat spray, a condition which I doubt not the artist has seen on some of the shallow Dutch seas, but which I have never met with myself, and of the rendering of which therefore I cannot speak. Yet even in these, which I think among the poorest works of the painter, the expressions of breeze, motion, and light, are very marvellous ; and it is instructive to compare them either with the lifeless works of the Dutch themselves, or with any modern imitations of them, as for instance with the seas of Callcott, where all the light is white and all the shadows gray, where no distinction is made between water and foam, or between real and reflective shadow, and which are generally without evidence of the artists having ever seen the sea.

§ 37. Open seas of Turner's earlier times.

Some pictures, however, belonging to this period of Turner are free from the Dutch infection, and show the real power of the artist. A very important one is in the possession of Lord Francis Egerton, somewhat heavy in its forms, but remarkable for the grandeur of distance obtained at the horizon ; a much smaller, but more powerful example is the Port Ruysdael in the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq., with which I know of no work at all comparable for the expression of the white, wild, cold, comfortless waves of northern sea, even though the sea is almost subordinate to the awful rolling clouds. Both these pictures are very gray. The Pas de Calais has more color, and shows more art than either, yet is less impressive. Recently, two marines of the same subdued color have appeared (1843) among his more radiant works. One, Ostend, somewhat forced and affected, but the other, also called Port Ruysdael, is among the most perfect sea pictures he has produced, and especially remarkable as being painted without one marked opposition either of color or of shade, all quiet and simple even to an extreme, so that the picture was exceedingly unattractive at first sight. The shadow of the pier-head on the near waves is marked solely by touches indicative of reflected light, and so mysteriously that when the picture is seen near, it is quite untraceable, and comes into existence as the spectator retires. It is thus of peculiar truth and value; and instructive as a contrast to the dark shadows of his earlier time.

§ 38. Effect of sea after prolonged storm.

Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights, and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast,* which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery, from its edge ; these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each ; the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract ; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it as described above, (Section III. Chapter VI. § 13,) and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist ; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave ; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all this chaos ; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air ; that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark or natural evidence of position is left ; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract. Suppose the effect of the first sunbeam sent from above to show this annihilation to itself, and you

---

* The "yesty waves" of Shakspeare have made the likeness familiar, and probably most readers take the expression as merely equivalent to "foamy;" but Shakspeare knew better. Sea-foam does not, under ordinary circumstances, last a moment after it is formed, but disappears, as above described, in a mere white film. But the foam of a prolonged tempest is altogether different; it is "whipped" foam,—thick, permanent, and, in a foul or discolored sea, very ugly, especially in the way it hangs about the tops of the waves, and gathers into clotted concretions before the driving wind. The sea looks truly working or fermenting. The following passage from Fenimore Cooper is an interesting confirmation of the rest of the above description, which may be depended upon as entirely free from exaggeration:—"For the first time I now witnessed a tempest at sea. Gales, and pretty hard ones, I had often seen, but the force of the wind on this occasion as much exceeded that in ordinary gales of wind, as the force of these had exceeded that

of a whole-sail breeze. The seas seemed crushed; the pressure of the swooping atmosphere, as the currents of the air went howling over the surface of the ocean, fairly preventing them from rising; or where a mound of water did appear, it was scooped up and borne off in spray, as the axe dubs inequalities from the log. When the day returned, a species of lurid, sombre light was diffused over the watery waste, though nothing was visible but the ocean and the ship. Even the sea-birds seemed to have taken refuge in the caverns of the adjacent coast, none reappearing with the dawn. The air was full of spray, and it was with difficulty that the eye could penetrate as far into the humid atmosphere as half a mile."—*Miles Wallingford.* Half a mile is an over-estimate in coast.

have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842—the Snow-storm, one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light that has ever been put on canvas, even by Turner. Of course it was not understood ; his finest works never are ; but there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this, for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time, and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through. To those who have, it is one of the noblest lessons of nature.

§ 39. Turner's noblest work, the painting of the deep open sea in the Slave Ship.

But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the Slave Ship, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic after prolonged storm ; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep-drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges, the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendor which burns like gold and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them ; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty* ship as it labors amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight,—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.

I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception—ideal in the highest sense of the word—is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated knowledge of a life; its color is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvas is a perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship buoyant, bending, and full of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful;† and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions—(completing thus the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable Sea.

§ 40. Its united excellences and perfection as a whole.

---

* She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses.

† There is a piece of tone of the same kind, equal in one part, but not so united with the rest of the picture, in the storm scene illustrative of the Antiquary,—a sunset light on polished sea. I ought to have particularly mentioned the sea in the Lowestoffe, as a piece of the cutting motion of shallow water, under storm, altogether in gray, which should be especially contrasted, as a piece of color, with the grays of Vandevelde. And the sea in the Great Yarmouth should have been noticed for its expression of water in violent agitation, seen in enormous extent from a great elevation. There is almost every form of sea in it,—rolling waves dashing on the pier—successive breakers rolling to the shore—a vast horizon of multitudinous waves—and winding canals of calm water along the sands, bringing fragments of bright sky down into their yellow waste. There is hardly one of the views of the Southern Coast which does not give some new condition or circumstance of sea.

SECTION VI.

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER I.

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.

WE have now arrived at the consideration of what was, with the old masters, the subject of most serious and perpetual study. If they do not give us truth here, they cannot have the faculty of truth in them; for foliage is the chief component part of all their pictures, and is finished by them with a care and labor which, if bestowed without attaining truth, must prove either their total bluntness of perception, or total powerlessness of hand. With the Italian school I can scarcely recollect a single instance in which foliage does not form the greater part of the picture; in fact, they are rather painters of tree-portrait than landscape painters; for rocks, and sky, and architecture are usually mere accessories and backgrounds to the dark masses of laborious foliage, of which the composition principally consists. Yet we shall be less detained by the examination of foliage than by our former subjects; since where specific form is organized and complete, and the occurrence of the object universal, it is easy, without requiring any laborious attention in the reader, to demonstrate to him quite as much of the truth or falsehood of various representations of it, as may serve to determine the character and rank of the painter.

§ 1. Frequent occurrence of foliage in the works of the old masters.

It will be best to begin as nature does, with the stems and branches, and then to put the leaves on. And in speaking of trees generally, be it observed, when I say *all* trees, I mean only those ordinary forest or copse trees of Europe, which are the chief subjects of the landscape painter. I do [illegible] mean to include every kind of foliage which by any accident can find its way into a picture, but the ordinary trees of Europe,—oak, elm, ash, hazel, willow, birch, beech, poplar, chestnut, pine, mulberry, olive, ilex, carubbe, and such others. I do not purpose to examine the characteristics of each tree; it will be enough to observe the laws common to all. First, then, neither the stems nor the boughs of any of the above trees *taper*, except where they fork. Wherever a stem sends off a branch, or a branch a lesser bough, or a lesser bough a bud, the stem or the branch is, on the instant, less in diameter by the exact quantity of the branch or the bough they have sent off, and they remain of the same diameter; or if there be any change, rather increase than diminish until they send off another branch or bough. This law is imperative and without exception; no bough, nor stem, nor twig, ever tapering or becoming narrower towards its extremity by a hairbreadth, save where it parts with some portion of its substance at a fork or bud, so that if all the twigs and sprays at the top and sides of the tree, which are, and *have been*, could be united without loss of space, they would form a round log of the diameter of the trunk from which they spring.

§ 2. Laws common to all forest trees. Their branches do not taper, but only divide.

But as the trunks of most trees send off twigs and sprays of light under foliage, of which every individual fibre takes precisely its own thickness of wood from the parent stem, and as many of these drop off, leaving nothing but a small excrescence to record their existence, there is frequently a slight and delicate appearance of tapering bestowed on the trunk itself; while the same operation takes place much more extensively in the branches, it being natural to almost all trees to send out from their young limbs more wood than they can support, which, as the stem increases, gets contracted at the point of insertion, so as to check the flow of the sap, and then dies and drops off, leaving all along the bough, first on one side, then on another, a series of small excrescences, sufficient to account for a degree of tapering, which is yet so very slight, that if we select

§ 3. Appearance of tapering caused by frequent buds.

a portion of a branch with no real fork or living bough to divide it or diminish it, the tapering is scarcely to be detected by the eye; and if we select a portion without such evidences of past ramification, there will be found none whatsoever.

§ 4. And care of nature to conceal the parallelism.

But nature takes great care and pains to conceal this uniformity in her boughs. They are perpetually parting with little sprays here and there, which steal away their substance cautiously, and where the eye does not perceive the theft, until, a little way above, it feels the loss; and in the upper parts of the tree, the ramifications take place so constantly and delicately, that the effect upon the eye is precisely the same as if the boughs actually tapered, except here and there, where some avaricious one, greedy of substance, runs on for two or three yards without parting with anything, and becomes ungraceful in so doing.

§ 5. The degree of tapering which may be represented as continuous.

Hence we see that although boughs may, and must be represented as actually tapering, they must only be so when they are sending off foliage and sprays, and when they are at such a distance that the particular forks and divisions cannot be evident to the eye; and farther, even in such circumstances the tapering never can be sudden or rapid. No bough ever, with appearance of smooth tapering, loses more than one tenth of its diameter in a length of ten diameters. Any greater diminution than this must be accounted for by visible ramification, and must take place by steps, at each fork.

§ 6. The trees of Gaspar Poussin;

And therefore we see at once that the stem of Gaspar Poussin's tall tree, on the right of the La Riccia, in the National Gallery, is a painting of a carrot or a parsnip, not of the trunk of a tree. For, being so near that every individual leaf is visible, we should not have seen, in nature, one branch or stem actually tapering. We should have received an *impression* of graceful diminution; but we should have been able, on examination, to trace it joint by joint, fork by fork, into the thousand minor supports of the leaves. Gaspar Poussin's stem, on the contrary, only sends off four or five minor branches altogether, and both it and they taper violently, and without showing why or wherefore —without parting with a single twig—without showing one vestige of roughness or excrescence—and leaving, therefore, their unfortunate leaves to hold on as best they may. The latter, however, are clever leaves, and support themselves as swarming bees do, hanging on by each other.

§ 7. And of the Italian school generally, defy this law.

But even this piece of work is a jest to the perpetration of the bough at the left-hand upper corner of the picture opposite to it,—the View near Albano. This latter is a representation of an ornamental group of elephants' tusks, with feathers tied to the ends of them. Not the wildest imagination could ever conjure up in it the remotest resemblance to the bough of a tree. It might be the claws of a witch—the talons of an eagle—the horns of a fiend ; but it is a full assemblage of every conceivable falsehood which can be told respecting foliage—a piece of work so barbarous in every way, that one glance at it ought to prove the complete charlatanism and trickery of the whole system of the old landscape painters. For I will depart for once from my usual plan, of abstaining from all assertion of a thing's being beautiful or otherwise ; I will say here, at once, that such drawing as this is as ugly as it is childish, and as painful as it is false ; and that the man who could tolerate, much more, who could deliberately set down such a thing on his canvas, had neither eye nor feeling for one single attribute of excellence of God's works. He might have drawn the other stem in excusable ignorance, or under some false impression of being able to improve upon nature ; but *this* is conclusive and unpardonable. Again, take the stem of the chief tree in Claude's Narcissus. It is a very faithful portrait of a large boa-constrictor, with a handsome tail ; the kind of trunk which young ladies at fashionable boarding-schools represent with nosegays at the top of them, by way of forest scenery.

§ 8. The truth, as it is given by J. D. Harding.

Let us refresh ourselves for a moment, by looking at the truth. We need not go to Turner, we will go to the man who, next to him, is unquestionably the greatest master of foliage in Europe—J. D.

Harding. Take the trunk of the largest stone-pine, Plate 25, in the Park and the Forest. For the first nine or ten feet from the ground it does not lose one hairbreadth of its diameter. But the shoot, broken off just under the crossing part of the distant tree, is followed by an instant diminution of the trunk, perfectly appreciable both by the eye and the compasses. Again, the stem maintains undiminished thickness, up to the two shoots on the left, from the loss of which it suffers again perceptibly. On the right, immediately above, is the stump of a very large bough, whose loss reduces the trunk suddenly to about two-thirds of what it was at the root. Diminished again, less considerably, by the minor branch close to this stump, it now retains its diameter up to the three branches, broken off just under the head, where it once more loses in diameter, and finally branches into the multitude of head-boughs, of which not one will be found tapering in any part, but losing themselves gradually by division among their offshoots and spray. This is nature, and beauty too.

§ 9. Boughs, in consequence of this law, *must* diminish where they divide. Those of the old masters often do not.

But the old masters are not satisfied with drawing carrots for boughs. Nature can be violated in more ways than one, and the industry with which they seek out and adopt every conceivable mode of contradicting her is matter of no small interest. It is evident, from what we have above stated of the structure of all trees, that as no boughs diminish where they do not fork, so they cannot fork without diminishing. It is impossible that the smallest shoot can be sent out of a bough without a diminution of the diameter above it; and wherever a branch goes off it must not only be less in diameter than the bough from which it springs, but the bough beyond the fork must be less by precisely the quantity of the branch it has sent off.* Now observe the bough underneath the first bend of the great stem in Claude's Narcissus; it sends off four branches like the ribs of a leaf. The two lowest of these are both quite as thick as the parent stem, and the stem itself is much thicker after it has sent off the first one than it was before. The top boughs of the central tree, in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, ramify in the same scientific way.

---

* It sometimes happens that a morbid direction of growth will cause an exception here and there to this rule, the bough swelling beyond its legitimate size; knots and excrescences, of course, sometimes interfere with the effect of diminution. I believe that in the laurel, when it grows large and old, singular instances may be found of thick upper

§ 10. Boughs must multiply as they diminish. Those of the old masters do not.

But there are further conclusions to be drawn from this great principle in trees. As they only diminish where they divide, their increase of number is in precise proportion to their diminution of size, so that whenever we come to the extremities of boughs, we must have a multitude of sprays sufficient to make up, if they were united, the bulk of that from which they spring. Where a bough divides into two equal ramifications, the diameter of each of the two is about two-thirds that of the single one, and the sum of their diameters, therefore, one-fourth greater than the diameter of the single one. Hence, if no boughs died or were lost, the quantity of wood in the sprays would appear one-fourth greater than would be necessary to make up the thickness of the trunk. But the lost boughs remove the excess, and therefore, speaking broadly, the diameters of the outer boughs put together would generally just make up the diameter of the trunk. Precision in representing this is neither desirable nor possible. All that is required is just so much observance of the general principle as may make the eye feel satisfied that there is something like the same quantity of wood in the sprays which there is in the stem. But to do this, there must be, what there always is in nature, an exceeding complexity of the outer sprays. This complexity gradually increases towards their extremities, of course exactly in proportion to the slenderness of the twigs. The slenderer they become, the more there are of them, until at last, at the extremities of the tree, they form a mass of in-

---

boughs and over quantity of wood at the extremities. All these accidents or exceptions are felt as such by the eye. They may occasionally be used by the painter in savage or grotesque scenery, or as points of contrast, but are no excuse for his ever losing sight of the general law.

tricacy, which in winter, when it can be seen, is scarcely distinguishable from fine herbage, and is beyond all power of definite representation; it can only be expressed by a mass of involved strokes. Also, as they shoot out in every direction, some are nearer, some more distant; some distinct, some faint; and their intersections and relations of distance are marked with the most exquisite gradations of aerial perspective. Now it will be found universally in the works of Claude, Gaspar, and Salvator, that the boughs do *not* get in the least complex or multiplied towards the extremities—that each large limb forks only into two or three smaller ones, each of which vanishes into the air without any cause or reason for such unaccountable conduct—unless that the mass of leaves transfixed upon it or tied to it, entirely dependent on its single strength, have been too much, as well they may be, for its powers of solitary endurance. This total ignorance of tree structure is shown throughout their works. The Sinon before Priam is an instance of it in a really fine work of Claude's, but the most gross examples are in the works of Salvator.

§ 11. Bough-drawing of Salvator.

It appears that this latter artist was hardly in the habit of studying from nature at all after his boyish ramble among the Calabrian hills; and I do not recollect any instance of a piece of his bough-drawing which is not palpably and demonstrably a made-up phantasm of the studio, the proof derivable from this illegitimate tapering being one of the most convincing. The painter is always visibly embarrassed to reduce the thick boughs to spray, and *feeling* (for Salvator naturally had acute feeling for truth) that the bough was wrong when it tapered suddenly, he accomplishes its diminution by an impossible protraction; throwing out shoot after shoot until his branches straggle all across the picture, and at last disappear unwillingly where there is no room for them to stretch any farther. The consequence is, that whatever leaves are put upon such boughs have evidently no adequate support, their power of leverage is enough to uproot the tree; or if the boughs are left bare, they have the look of the long tentacula of some complicated marine monster, or of the waving endless threads of bunchy sea-weed, instead of the firm, upholding, braced, and bending grace of natural boughs. I grant that this is in a measure done by Salvator from a love of ghastliness, and that in certain scenes it is in a sort allowable; but it is in a far greater degree done from pure ignorance of tree structure, as is sufficiently proved by the landscape of the Pitti palace, Peace burning the arms of War; where the spirit of the scene is intended to be quite other than ghastly, and yet the tree branches show the usual errors in an extraordinary degree; every one of their arrangements is impossible, and the trunk of the tree could not for a moment support the foliage it is loaded with. So also in the pictures of the Guadagni palace. And even where the skeleton look of branches is justifiable or desirable, there is no occasion for any violation of natural laws. I have seen more spectral character in the real limbs of a blasted oak, than ever in Salvator's best monstrosities; more horror is to be obtained by right combination of inventive line, than by drawing tree branches as if they were wing-bones of a pterodactyle. All departure from natural forms to give fearfulness is mere Germanism; it is the work of fancy, not of imagination,* and instantly degrades whatever it affects to third-rate level. There is nothing more marked in truly great men, than their power of being dreadful without being false or licentious. In Tintoret's Murder of Abel, the head of the sacrificed firstling lies in the corner of the foreground, obscurely sketched in, and with the light gleaming upon its glazed eyes. There is nothing exaggerated about the head, but there is more horror got out of it, and more of death suggested by its treatment, than if he had turned all the trees of his picture into skeletons, and raised a host of demons to drive the club.

§ 12. All these errors especially shown in Claude's sketches, and concentrated in a work of G. Poussin's.

It is curious that in Salvator's sketches or etchings there is less that is wrong than in his paintings,—there seems a fresher remembrance of nature about them. Not so with Claude. It is only by looking over his sketches, in the British Museum, that a complete and just idea is to be formed of his capacities of error; for the feeling and arrangement of many of them are those of an advanced age, so that we can scarcely set them down for what they resemble—the work of a boy ten years old; and the drawing being seen without any aids of tone or color to set it off, shows in its naked falsehood. The windy landscape of Poussin, opposite the Dido and Æneas, in the National Gallery, presents us, in the foreground tree, with a piece of atrocity which I think, to any person who candidly considers it, may save me all farther trouble of demonstrating the errors of ancient art. I do not in the least suspect the picture: the tones of it, and much of the handling, are masterly; yet that foreground tree comprises every conceivable violation of truth which the human hand can commit, or head invent, in drawing a tree—except only, that it is not drawn root uppermost. It has no bark, no roughness nor character of stem; its boughs do not grow out of each other, but are stuck into each other; they ramify without diminishing, diminish without ramifying, are terminated by no complicated sprays, have their leaves tied to their ends, like the heads of Dutch brooms; and finally, and chiefly, they are evidently not made of wood, but of some soft elastic substance, which the wind can stretch out as it pleases, for there is not a vestige of an angle in any one of them. Now, the fiercest wind that ever blew upon the earth, could not take the angles out of the bough of a tree an inch thick. The whole bough bends together, retaining its elbows, and angles, and natural form, but affected throughout with curvature in each of its parts and joints. That part of it which was before perpendicular being bent aside, and that which was before sloping, being bent into still greater inclination, the angle at which the two parts meet remains the same; or if the strain be put in the opposite direction, the bough will break long before it loses its angle. You will find it difficult to bend the angles out of the youngest sapling, if they be marked; and absolutely impossible, with a strong bough. You may break it, but you will not destroy its angles. And if you watch a

---

* Compare Part III. Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 6, 7.

§ 13. Impossibility of the angles of boughs being taken out of them by wind.

tree in the wildest storm, you will find that though all its boughs are bending, none lose their character but the utmost shoots and sapling spray. Hence Gaspar Poussin, by his bad drawing, does not make his storm strong, but his tree weak; he does not make his gust violent, but his boughs of India-rubber.

These laws respecting vegetation are so far more imperative than those which were stated respecting water, that the greatest artist cannot violate them without danger, because they are laws resulting from organic structure, which it is always painful to see interrupted; on the other hand, they have this in common with all laws, that they may be observed with mathematical precision, yet with no grateful result; the disciplined eye and the life in the woods are worth more than all botanical knowledge. For there is that about the growing of the tree trunk, and that grace in its upper ramification which cannot be taught, and which cannot even be seen but by eager watchfulness. There is not an Exhibition passes, but there appear in it hundreds of elaborate paintings of trees, many of them executed from nature. For three hundred years back, trees have been drawn with affection by all the civilized nations of Europe, and yet I repeat boldly, what I before asserted, that no men but Titian and Turner ever drew the stem of a tree.

§ 14. Bough-drawing of Titian.

Generally, I think, the perception of the muscular qualities of the tree trunk incomplete, except in men who have studied the human figure, and in loose expression of those characters, the painter who can draw the living muscle seldom fails; but the thoroughly peculiar lines belonging to woody fibre, can only be learned by patient forest study; and hence in all the trees of the merely historical painters, there is fault of some kind or another, commonly exaggeration of the muscular swellings, or insipidity and want of spring in curvature, or fantasticism and unnaturalness of arrangement, and especially a want of the peculiar characters of bark which express the growth and age of the tree; for bark is no mere excrescence, lifeless and external—it is a skin of especial significance in its indications of the organic form beneath; in places under the arms of the tree it wrinkles up and forms fine lines *round* the trunk, inestimable in their indication of the direction of its surface ; in others, it bursts or peels longitudinally, and the rending and bursting of it are influenced in direction and degree by the under-growth and swelling of the woody fibre, and are not a mere roughness and granulated pattern of the hide. Where there are so many points to be observed, some are almost always exaggerated, and others missed, according to the predilections of the painter. Rembrandt and Albert Durer have given some splendid examples of woody texture, but both miss the grace of the great lines. Titian took a larger view and reached a higher truth, yet (as before noticed) from the habit of drawing the figure, he admits too much flaccidity and bend, and sometimes makes his tree trunks look flexible like sea-weed. There is a peculiar stiffness and spring about the curves of the wood, which separates them completely from animal curves, and which especially defies recollection or invention ; it is so subtile that it escapes but too often, even in the most patient study from nature ; it lies within the thickness of a pencil line. Farther, the modes of ramification of the upper branches are so varied, inventive, and graceful, that the least alteration of them, even in the measure of a hair-breadth, spoils them ; and though it is sometimes possible to get rid of a troublesome bough, accidentally awkward, or in some minor respects to assist the arrangement, yet so far as the real branches are copied, the hand libels their lovely curvatures even in its best attempts to follow them.

§ 15. Bough-drawing of Turner.

These two characters, the woody stiffness hinted through muscular line, and the inventive grace of the upper boughs, have never been rendered except by Turner ; he does not merely draw them better than others, but he is the only man who has ever drawn them at all. Of the woody character, the tree subjects of the Liber Studiorum afford marked examples ; the Cephalus and Procris, scenes near the Grand Chartreuse and Blair Athol, Juvenile Tricks, and Hedging and Ditching, may be particularized ; in the England series, the Bolton Abbey is perhaps a more characteristic and thoroughly Turneresque example than any.

Of the arrangement of the upper boughs, the Æsacus and Hesperie is perhaps the most consummate example, the absolute truth and simplicity and freedom from anything like fantasticism or animal form being as marked on the one hand, as the exquisite imaginativeness of the lines on the other: among the Yorkshire subjects the Aske Hall, Kirby Lonsdale Churchyard, and Brignall Church are most characteristic: among the England subjects the Warwick, Dartmouth Cove, Durham, and Chain Bridge over the Tees, where the piece of thicket on the right has been well rendered by the engraver, and is peculiarly expressive of the aerial relations and play of light among complex boughs. The vignette at the opening of Rogers's Pleasures of Memory, that of Chiefswood Cottage in the Illustrations to Scott's Works, and the Chateau de la belle Gabrielle, engraved for the Keepsake, are among the most graceful examples accessible to every one; the Crossing the Brook will occur at once to those acquainted with the artist's gallery. The drawing of the stems in all these instances, and indeed in all the various and frequent minor occurrences of such subject throughout the painter's works is entirely unique, there is nothing of the same kind in art.

§ 16. Leafage. Its variety and symmetry.

Let us, however, pass to the leafage of the elder landscape painters, and see if it atones for the deficiencies of the stems. One of the most remarkable characters of natural leafage is the constancy with which, while the leaves are arranged on the spray with exquisite regularity, that regularity is modified in their actual effect. For as in every group of leaves some are seen sideways, forming merely long lines, some foreshortened, some crossing each other, every one differently turned and placed from all the others, the forms of the leaves, though in themselves similar, give rise to a thousand strange and differing forms in the group; and the shadows of some, passing over the others, still farther disguise and confuse the mass, until the eye can distinguish nothing but a graceful and flexible disorder of innumerable forms, with here and there a perfect leaf on the extremity, or a symmetrical association of one or two, just enough to mark the specific character and to give unity and grace, but never enough to repeat in one group what was done in another—never enough to prevent the eye from feeling that, however regular and mathematical may be the structure of parts, what is composed out of them is as various and infinite as any other part of nature. Nor does this take place in general effect only. Break off an elm bough, three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf. It is ten to one if in the whole bough, (provided you do not twist it about as you work,) you find one form of a leaf exactly like another; perhaps you will not even have *one* complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it; and though the whole bough will look graceful and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of it like another. Now go to Gaspar Poussin, and take one of his sprays where they come against the sky; you may count it all round, one, two, three, four, one bunch; five, six, seven, eight, two bunches; nine, ten, eleven, twelve, three bunches; with four leaves each,—and such leaves! every one precisely the same as its neighbor, blunt and round at the end, (where every forest leaf is sharp, except that of the fig-tree,) tied together by the roots, and so fastened on to the demoniacal claws above described, one bunch to each claw.

§ 17. Perfect regularity of Poussin.

But if nature is so various when you have a bough on the table before you, what must she be when she retires from you, and gives you her whole mass and multitude? The leaves then at the extremities become as fine as dust, a mere confusion of points and lines between you and the sky, a confusion which you might as well hope to draw sea-sand particle by particle, as to imitate leaf for leaf. This, as it comes down into the body of the tree, gets closer, but never opaque; it is always trans-

§ 18. Exceeding intricacy of nature's foliage.

parent, with crumbling lights in it letting you through to the sky; then, out of this, come, heavier and heavier, the masses of illumined foliage, all dazzling and inextricable, save here and there a single leaf on the extremities; then, under these, you get deep passages of broken, irregular gloom, passing into transparent, green-lighted, misty hollows; the twisted stems glancing through them in their pale and entangled infinity, and the shafted sunbeams, rained from above, running along the lustrous leaves for an instant; then lost, then caught again on some emerald bank or knotted root, to be sent up again with a faint reflex on the white under-sides of dim groups of drooping foliage, the shadows of the upper boughs running in gray network down the glossy stems, and resting in quiet checkers upon the glittering earth; but all penetrable and transparent, and, in proportion, inextricable and incomprehensible, except where across the labyrinth and the mystery of the dazzling light and dream-like shadow, falls, close to us, some solitary spray, some wreath of two or three motionless large leaves, the type and embodying of all that in the rest we feel and imagine, but can never see.

§ 19. How contradicted by the tree-patterns of G. Poussin.

Now, with thus much of nature in your mind, go to Gaspar Poussin's View near Albano, in the National Gallery. It is the very subject to unite all these effects,—a sloping bank shaded with intertwined forest;—and what has Gaspar given us? A mass of smooth, opaque, varnished brown, without one interstice, one change of hue, or any vestige of leafy structure in its interior, or in those parts of it, I should say, which are intended to represent interior; but out of it, over it rather, at regular intervals, we have circular groups of greenish touches, always the same in size, shape, and distance from each other, containing so exactly the same number of touches each, that you cannot tell one from another. There are eight or nine and thirty of them, laid over each other like fish-scales; the shade being most carefully made darker and darker as it recedes from each until it comes to the edge of the next, against which it cuts in the same sharp circular line, and then begins to decline again, until the canvas is covered, with about as much intelligence or feeling of art as a house-painter has in marbling a wainscot, or a weaver in repeating an ornamental pattern. What is there in this, which the most determined prejudice in favor of the old masters can for a moment suppose to resemble trees? It is exactly what the most ignorant beginner, trying to make a complete drawing, would lay down,—exactly the conception of trees which we have in the works of our worst drawing-masters, where the shade is laid on with the black-lead and stump, and every human power exerted to make it look like a kitchen-grate well polished.

§ 20. How followed by Creswick.

Oppose to this the drawing even of our somewhat inferior tree-painters. I will not insult Harding by mentioning his work after it, but take Creswick, for instance, and match one of his sparkling bits of green leafage with this tree-pattern of Poussin's. I do not say there is not a dignity and impressiveness about the old landscape, owing to its simplicity; and I am very far from calling Creswick's good tree-painting; it is false in color and deficient in mass and freedom, and has many other defects, but it is the work of a man who has sought earnestly for truth; and who, with one thought or memory of nature in his heart, could look at the two landscapes, and receive Poussin's with ordinary patience? Take Creswick in black and white, where he is unembarrassed by his fondness for pea-green, the illustrations, for instance, to the Nut-brown Maid, in the Book of English Ballads. Look at the intricacy and fulness of the dark oak foliage where it bends over the brook, see how you can go through it, and into it, and come out behind it to the quiet bit of sky. Observe the gray, aerial transparency of the stunted copse on the left, and the entangling of the boughs where the light near foliage detaches itself. Above all, note the forms of the masses of light. Not things like scales or shells, sharp at the edge and flat in the middle, but irregular and rounded, stealing in and out accidently from the shadow, and presenting, as the masses of all trees do, in general outline, a resemblance to the specific forms of the leaves of which they are composed. Turn over the page, and look into the weaving of the foliage and sprays against the dark night-sky, how near they are, yet how untraceable ; see how the moonlight creeps up underneath them, trembling and shivering on the silver boughs above ; note also, the descending bit of ivy on the left, of which only two leaves are made out, and the rest is confusion, or tells only in the moonlight like faint flakes of snow.

§ 21. Perfect unity in nature's foliage.

But nature observes another principle in her foliage more important even than its intricacy. She always secures an exceeding harmony and repose. She is *so* intricate that her minuteness of parts becomes to the eye, at a little distance, one united veil or cloud of leaves, to destroy the evenness of which is perhaps a greater fault than to destroy its transparency. Look at Creswick's oak again, in its dark parts. Intricate as it is, all is blended into a cloud-like harmony of shade, which becomes fainter and fainter, as it retires, with the most delicate flatness and unity of tone. And it is by this kind of vaporescence, so to speak, by this flat, misty, unison of parts, that nature, and her faithful followers, are enabled to keep the eye in perfect repose in the midst of profusion, and to display beauty of form, wherever they choose, to the greatest possible advantage, by throwing it across some quiet, visionary passage of dimness and rest.

§ 22. Total want of it in Both and Hobbima.

It is here that Hobbima and Both fail. They can paint oak leafage faithfully, but do not know where to stop, and by doing too much, lose the truth of all,—lose the very truth of detail at which they aim, for all their minute work only gives two leaves to nature's twenty. They are evidently incapable of even thinking of a tree, much more of drawing it, except leaf by leaf ; they have no notion nor sense of simplicity, mass, or obscurity, and when they come to distance, where it is totally impossible that leaves should be separately seen, yet, being incapable of conceiving or rendering the grand and quiet forms of truth, they are reduced to paint their bushes with dots and touches expressive of leaves three feet broad each. Nevertheless there is a genuine aim in their works, and their failure is rather to be attributed to ignorance of art, than to such want of sense for nature as we find in Claude or Poussin; and when they come close home, we sometimes receive from them fine passages of mechanical truth.

§ 23. How rendered by Turner.

But let us oppose to their works the group of trees on the left in Turner's Marly.* We have there perfect and ceaseless intricacy to oppose to Poussin,—perfect and unbroken repose to oppose to Hobbima; and in the unity of these the perfection of truth. This group may be taken as a fair standard of Turner's tree-painting. We have in it the admirably drawn stems, instead of the claws or the serpents; full, transparent, boundless intricacy, instead of the shell pattern; and misty depth of intermingled light and leafage, instead of perpetual repetition of one mechanical touch.

§ 24. The near leafage of Claude. His middle distances are good.

I have already spoken (Section II. Chapter IV. § 15,) of the way in which mystery and intricacy are carried even into the nearest leaves of the foreground, and noticed the want of such intricacy even in the best works of the old masters. Claude's are particularly deficient, for by representing every particular leaf of them, or trying to do so, he makes nature finite, and even his nearest bits of leafage are utterly false, for they have neither shadows modifying their form, (compare Section II. Chapter III. § 7,) nor sparkling lights, nor confused intersections of their own forms and lines; and the perpetual repetition of the same shape of leaves and the same arrangement, relieved from a black ground, is more like an ornamental pattern for dress than the painting of a foreground. Nevertheless, the foliage of Claude, in his middle distances, is the finest and truest part of his pictures, and, on the whole, affords the best example of good drawing to be found in ancient art. It is always false in color, and has not boughs enough amongst it, and the stems commonly look a great deal nearer than any part of it, but it is still graceful, flexible, abundant, intricate ; and, in all but color and connection with stems, very nearly right. Of the perfect painting of thick, leafy foreground, Turner's Mercury and Argus, and Oakhampton, are the standards.*

---

* This group I have before noticed as singularly (but, I doubt not, accidentally, and in consequence of the love of the two great painters for the same grand forms) resembling that introduced by Tintoret in the background of his Cain and Abel.

§ 25. Universal termination of trees in symmetrical curves.

The last and most important truth to be observed respecting trees, is that their boughs always, in finely grown individuals, bear among themselves such a ratio of length as to describe with their extremities a symmetrical curve, constant for each species ; and within this curve all the irregularities, segments, and divisions of the tree are included, each bough reaching the limit with its extremity, but not passing it. When a tree is perfectly grown, each bough starts from the trunk with just so much wood as, allowing for constant ramification, will enable it to reach the terminal line ; or if by mistake, it start with too little, it will proceed without ramifying till within a distance where it may safely divide ; if on the contrary it start with too much, it will ramify quickly and constantly; or, to express the real operation more accurately, each bough, growing on so as to keep even with its neighbors, takes so much wood from the trunk as is sufficient to enable it to do so, more or less in proportion as it ramifies fast or slowly. In badly grown trees, the boughs are apt to fall short of the curve, or at least, there are so many jags and openings that its symmetry is interrupted; and in young trees, the impatience of the upper shoots frequently breaks the line; but in perfect and mature trees, every bough does its duty completely, and the line of curve is quite filled up, and the mass within it unbroken, so that the tree assumes the shape of a dome, as in the oak, or, in tall trees, of a pear, with the stalk downmost. The old masters paid no attention whatsoever to this great principle. They swing their boughs about, anywhere and everywhere; each stops or goes on just as it likes, nor will it be possible, in any of their works, to find a single example in which any symmetrical curve is indicated by the extremities.*

---

* The above paragraphs I have left as originally written, because they are quite true as far as they reach ; but like many other portions of this essay, they take in a very small portion of the truth. I shall not add to them at present, because I can explain my meaning better in our consideration of the laws of beauty; but the reader must bear in mind that what is above stated refers, throughout, to large masses of foliage seen under broad sunshine,—and it has especial reference to Turner's enormous scale of scene, and intense desire of light. In twilight, when tree-forms are seen against sky, other laws come into operation, as well as in subject of narrow limits and near foreground. It is, I think, to be regretted that Turner does not in his Academy pictures sometimes take more confined and gloomy subjects, like that grand one, near the Chartreuse, of the Liber Studiorum, wherein his magnificent power of elaborating close foliage might be developed ; but, for the present, let the reader, with respect to what has been here said of close foliage, note the drawing of the leaves in that plate, in the Æsacus and Hesperie, and the Cephalus, and the elaboration of the foregrounds in the Yorkshire drawings; let him compare what is said of Turner's foliage painting above in Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII. § 40, § 41, and of Titian's previously, as well as Part III. Sect. I. Chap. VIII., and Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 21. I shall hereafter endeavor to arrange the subject in a more systematic manner; but what additional observations I may have to make will none of them be in any wise more favorable to Gaspar, Salvator or Hobbima, than the above paragraphs.

§ 26. Altogether unobserved by the old masters. Always given by Turner.

But I need scarcely tell any one in the slightest degree acquainted with the works of Turner, how rigidly and constantly he adheres to this principle of nature; taking in his highest compositions the perfect ideal form, every spray being graceful and varied in itself, but inevitably terminating at the assigned limit, and filling up the curve without break or gap; in his lower works, taking less perfect form, but invariably hinting the constant tendency in all, and thus, in spite of his abundant complexity, he arranges his trees under simpler and grander forms than any other artist, even among the moderns.

---

* Perhaps in some instances, this may be the case with the trees of Nicholas Poussin; but even with him the boughs only touch the line of limit with their central *points* of extremity, and are not *sectors* of the great curve—forming a part of it with expanded extremities, as in nature. Draw a few straight lines, from the centre to the circumference of a circle. The forms included between them are the forms of the individual boughs of a fine tree, with all their ramifications (only the external curve is not a circle, but more frequently two parabolas—which, I believe, it is in the oak—or an ellipse). But each bough of the old masters is club-shaped, and broadest, not at the outside of the tree, but a little way towards its centre.

§ 27. Foliage painting on the Continent.

It was above asserted that J. D. Harding is, after Turner, the greatest master of foliage in Europe ; I ought, however, to state that my knowledge of the modern landscape of Germany is very limited, and that, even with respect to France and Italy, I judge rather from the general tendency of study and character of mind visible in the annual Exhibition of the Louvre, and in some galleries of modern paintings at Milan, Venice, and Florence, than from any detailed acquaintance with the works of their celebrated painters. Yet I think I can hardly be mistaken. I have seen nothing to induce me to take a closer survey ; no life knowledge or emotion in any quarter ; nothing but the meanest and most ignorant copyism of vulgar details, coupled with a style of conception resembling that of the various lithographic ideals on the first leaves of the music of pastoral ballads. An exception ought, however, to be made in favor of French etching ; some studies in black and white may be seen in the narrow passages of the Louvre of very high merit, showing great skill and delicacy of execution, and most determined industry ; (in fact, I think when the French artist fails, it is never through fear of labor ;) nay, more than this, some of them exhibit acute perception of landscape character and great power of reaching simple impressions of gloom, wildness, sound, and motion. Some of their illustrated works also exhibit these powers in a high degree ; there is a spirit, fire, and sense of reality about some of the wood-cuts to the large edition of Paul and Virginia, and a determined rendering of separate feeling in each, such as we look for in vain in our own ornamental works.* But the French appear to have no teaching such as might carry them beyond this ; their entire ignorance of color renders the assumption of the brush instantly fatal, and the false, forced, and impious sentiment of the nation renders anything like grand composition altogether impossible.

---

* On the other hand, nothing can be more exquisitely ridiculous than the French illustrations of a second or third-rate order, as those to the Harmonies of Lamartine.

It is therefore only among good artists of our own school that I think any fair comparison can be instituted, and I wish to assert Harding's knowledge of foliage more distinctly, because he neither does justice to himself, nor is, I think, rightly estimated by his fellow-artists. I shall not make any invidious remarks respecting individuals, but I think it necessary to state generally, that the style of foliage painting chiefly characteristic of the pictures on the line of the Royal Academy is of the most degraded kind;* and that, except Turner and Mulready, we have, as far as I know, no Royal Academician capable of painting even the smallest portion of foliage in a dignified or correct manner; all is lost in green shadows with glittering yellow lights, white trunks with black patches on them, and leaves of no species in particular. Much laborious and clever foliage drawing is to be found in the rooms of the New Water-Color Society; but we have no one in any wise comparable to Harding for thorough knowledge of the subject, for power of expression in a sketch from nature, or for natural and unaffected conception in the study.

§ 28. Foliage of J. D. Harding. Its deficiencies.

Maintaining for him this high position, it is necessary that I should also state those deficiencies which appear to me to conceal his real power, and in no small degree to prevent his progress.

His over-fondness for brilliant execution I have already noticed. He is fonder of seeing something tolerably like a tree produced with few touches, than something very like a tree produced with many. Now, it is quite allowable that occasionally, and in portions of his picture, a great artist should indulge himself in this luxury of sketching, yet it is a perilous luxury; it blunts the feeling and weakens the hand. I have said enough in various places respecting the virtues of negligence and of

§ 29. His brilliancy of execution too manifest.

---

* Of Stanfield's foliage I remember too little to enable me to form any definite judgment; it is a pity that he so much neglects this noble element of landscape.

finish, (compare above the chapter on Ideas of Power in Part I. Sect. II., and Part III. Sect. I. Ch. X. § 4,) and I need only say here, therefore, that Harding's foliage is never sufficiently finished, and has at its best the look of a rapid sketch from nature touched upon at home. In 1843, (I think,) there was a pretty drawing in the rooms of the Water-Color Society,—the clear green water of a torrent resting among stones, with copse-like wood on each side, a bridge in the distance, a white flower (water-lily ?) catching the eye in front ; the tops of the trees on the left of this picture were mere broad blots of color dashed upon the sky and connected by stems. I allow the power necessary to attain any look of foliage by such means, but it is power abused : by no such means can any of the higher virtue and impressiveness of foliage be rendered. In the use of body color for near leaves, his execution is also too hasty ; often the touches are mere square or round dots, which can be understood only for foliage by their arrangement. This fault was especially marked in the trees of his picture painted for the Academy two years ago ; they were very nearly shapeless, and could not stand even in courtesy for walnut leaves, for which, judging by the make of the tree, they must have been intended.

§ 30. His bough-drawing and choice of form.

His drawing of boughs is, in all points of demonstrable law, right, and very frequently easy and graceful also ; yet it has two eminent faults, the first, that the flow of the bough is sacrificed to its texture, the pencil checking itself and hesitating at dots, and stripes, and knots, instead of following the grand and unbroken tendency of growth : the second, that however good the arrangement may be as far as regards merely flexibility, intricacy, and freedom, there are none of those composed groups of line which are unfailing in nature. Harding's work is not grand enough to be natural. The drawings in the park and the forest, are, I believe, almost facsimiles of sketches made from nature ; yet it is evident at once that in all of them nothing but the general lie and disposition of the boughs has been taken from the tree, and that no single branch or spray has been faithfully copied or patiently studied.

This want of close study necessarily causes several deficiencies of feeling respecting general form. Harding's choice is always of tree forms comparatively imperfect, leaning this way and that, and unequal in the lateral arrangements of foliage. Such forms are often graceful, always picturesque, but rarely grand; and when systematically adopted, untrue. It requires more patient study to attain just feeling of the dignity and character of a purely formed tree with all its symmetries perfect.

§ 21. Local color, how far expressible in black and white, and with what advantage.

One more cause of incorrectness I may note, though it is not peculiar to the artist's tree-drawing, but attaches to his general system of sketching. In Harding's valuable work on the use of the Lead Pencil, there is one principle advanced which I believe to be false and dangerous, that the local color of objects is not thereby to be rendered. I think the instance given is that of some baskets, whose darkness is occasioned solely by the touches indicating the wicker-work. Now, I believe, that an essential difference between the sketch of a great and of a comparatively inferior master is, that the former is conceived entirely in shade and color, and its masses are blocked out with reference to both, while the inferior draughtsman checks at textures and petty characters of object. If Rembrandt had had to sketch such baskets, he would have troubled himself very little about the wicker-work; but he would have looked to see where they came dark or light on the sand, and where there were any sparkling points of light on the wet osiers. These darks and lights he would have scratched in with the fastest lines he could, leaving no white paper but at the wet points of lustre; if he had had time, the wicker-work would have come afterwards.*

---

* It is true that many of Rembrandt's etchings are merely in line, but it may be observed that the subject is universally *conceived* in light and shade, and that the lines are either merely guides in the arrangement, or an exquisite indication of the key-notes of shade, on which the after-system of it is to be based—portions of fragmentary finish, showing the completeness of the conception.

And I think, that the first thing to be taught to any pupil, is neither how to manage the pencil, nor how to attain character of outline, but rather to see where things are light and where they are dark, and to draw them as he sees them, never caring whether his lines be dexterous or slovenly. The result of such study is the immediate substitution of downright drawing for symbolism, and afterwards a judicious moderation in the use of extreme lights and darks ; for where local colors are really drawn, so much of what seems violently dark is found to come light against something else, and so much of what seems high light to come dark against the sky, that the draughtsman trembles at finding himself plunged either into blackness or whiteness, and seeks, as he should, for means of obtaining force without either.

It is in consequence of his evident habit of sketching more with a view to detail and character than to the great masses, that Harding's chiaroscuro is frequently crude, scattered, and petty. Black shadows occur under his distant trees, white high lights on his foreground rocks, the foliage and trunks are divided by violent oppositions into separate masses, and the branches lose in spots of moss and furrowings of bark their soft roundings of delicate form, and their grand relations to each other and the sky.

§ 32. Opposition between great manner and great knowledge.

It is owing to my respect for the artist, and my belief in his power and conscientious desire to do what is best, that I have thus extended these somewhat unkind remarks. On the other hand, it is to be remembered, that his knowledge of nature is most extended, and his dexterity of drawing most instructive, especially considering his range of subject ; for whether in water, rock, or foliage, he is equally skilful in attaining whatever he desires, (though he does not always desire all that he ought ;) and artists should keep in mind, that neither grandeur of manner nor truth of system can atone for the want of this knowledge and this skill. Constable's manner is good and great, but being unable to draw even a log of wood, much more a trunk of a tree or a stone, he left his works destitute of substance, mere studies of effect without any expression of specific knowledge ; and thus even what is great in them has been productive, I believe, of very great injury in its encouragement of the most superficial qualities of the English school.

§ 33. Foliage of Cox, Fielding, and Cattermole.

The foliage of David Cox has been already noticed (preface to second edition), It is altogether exquisite in color, and in its impressions of coolness, shade, and mass ; of its drawing I cannot say anything, but that I should be sorry to see it better. Copley Fielding's is remarkable for its intricacy and elegance ; it is, however, not free from affectation, and, as has been before remarked, is always evidently composed in the study. The execution is too rough and woolly ; it is wanting in simplicity, sharpness, and freshness,—above all in specific character ; not, however, in his middle distances, where the rounded masses of forest and detached blasted trunks of fir are usually very admirable. Cattermole has very grand conceptions of general form, but wild and without substance, and therefore incapable of long maintaining their attractiveness, especially lately, the execution having become in the last degree coarse and affected. This is bitterly to be regretted, for few of our artists would paint foliage better, if he would paint it from nature, and with reverence.

§ 34. Hunt and Creswick. Green, how to be rendered expressive of light, and offensive if otherwise.

Hunt, I think, fails, and fails only, in foliage ; fails, as the Daguerreotype does, from over-fidelity ; for foliage will *not* be imitated, it must be reasoned out and suggested ; yet Hunt is the only man we have who can paint the real leaf green under sunlight, and, in this respect, his trees are delicious,—summer itself. Creswick has sweet feeling, and tries for the real green too, but, from want of science in his shadows, ends in green paint instead of green light ; in mere local color, instead of color raised by sunshine. One example is enough to show where the fault lies. In his picture of the Weald of Kent, in the British Institution this year, there was a cottage in the middle distance with white walls, and a red roof. The dark sides of the white walls and of the roof were of the same color, a dark purple—wrong for both.

Repeated inaccuracies of this kind necessarily deprive even the most brilliant color of all appearance of sunshine, and they are much to be deprecated in Creswick, as he is one of the very few artists who *do* draw from nature and try for nature. Some of his thickets and torrent-beds are most painfully studied, and yet he cannot draw a bough nor a stone. I suspect he is too much in the habit of studying only large views on the spot, and not of drawing small portions thoroughly. I trust it will be seen that these, as all other remarks that I have made throughout this volume on particular works, are not in depreciation of, or unthankfulness for, what the artist has done, but in the desire that he should do himself more justice and more honor. I have much pleasure in Creswick's works, and I am glad always to see them admired by others.

§ 35. Conclusion. Works of J. Linnell and S. Palmer.

I shall conclude this sketch of the foliage art of England, by mention of two artists, whom I believe to be representative of a considerable class, admirable in their reverence and patience of study, yet unappreciated by the public, because what they do is unrecommended by dexterities of handling. The forest studies of J. Linnell are peculiarly elaborate, and, in many points, most skilful; they fail perhaps of interest, owing to overfulness of detail and a want of generalization in the effect; but even a little more of the Harding sharpness of touch would set off their sterling qualities, and make them felt. A less known artist, S. Palmer, lately admitted a member of the Old Water-Color Society, is deserving of the very highest place among faithful followers of nature. His studies of foreign foliage especially are beyond all praise for care and fulness. I have never seen a stone pine or a cypress drawn except by him; and his feeling is as pure and grand as his fidelity is exemplary. He has not, however, yet, I think, discovered what is necessary and unnecessary in a great picture; and his works, sent to the Society's rooms, have been most unfavorable examples of his power, and have been generally, as yet, in places where all that is best in them is out of sight. I look to him, nevertheless, unless he lose himself in over-reverence for certain conventionalisms of the elder schools, as one of the probable renovators and correctors of whatever is failing or erroneous in the practice of English art.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL REMARKS RESPECTING THE TRUTH OF TURNER.

§ 1. No necessity of entering into discussion of architectural truth.

We have now arrived at some general conception of the extent of Turner's knowledge, and the truth of his practice, by the deliberate examination of the characteristics of the four great elements of landscape—sky, earth, water, and vegetation. I have not thought it necessary to devote a chapter to architecture, because enough has been said on this subject in Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII.; and its general truths, which are those with which the landscape painter, as such, is chiefly concerned, require only a simple and straightforward application of those rules of which every other material object of a landscape has required a most difficult and complicated application. Turner's knowledge of perspective probably adds to his power in the arrangement of every order of subject; but ignorance on this head is rather disgraceful than knowledge meritorious. It is disgraceful, for instance, that any man should commit such palpable and atrocious errors in ordinary perspective as are seen in the quay in Claude's seapiece, No. 14, National Gallery, or in the curved portico of No. 30; but still these are not points to be taken into consideration as having anything to do with artistical rank, just as, though we should say it was disgraceful if a great poet could not spell, we should not consider such a defect as in any way taking from his poetical rank. Neither is there anything particularly belonging to architecture, as such, which it is any credit to an artist to observe or represent; it is only a simple and clear field for the manifestation of his knowledge of general laws. Any surveyor or engineer could have drawn the steps and balustrade in the Hero and Leander, as well as Turner has ; but there is no man living but himself who could have thrown the accidental shadows upon them. I may, however, refer for general illustration of Turner's power as an architectural draughtsman, to the front of Rouen Cathedral, engraved in the Rivers of France, and to the Ely in the England. I know nothing in art which can be set beside the former of these for overwhelming grandeur and simplicity of effect, and inexhaustible intricacy of parts. I have then only a few remarks farther to offer respecting the general character of all those truths which we have been hitherto endeavoring to explain and illustrate.

§ 2. Extreme difficulty of illustrating or explaining the highest truth.

The difference in the accuracy of the lines of the Torso of the Vatican, (the Maestro of M. Angelo,) from those in one of M. Angelo's finest works, could perhaps scarcely be appreciated by any eye or feeling undisciplined by the most perfect and practical anatomical knowledge. It rests on points of such traceless and refined delicacy, that though we feel them in the result, we cannot follow them in the details. Yet they are such and so great as to place the Torso alone in art, solitary and supreme ; while the finest of M. Angelo's works, considered with respect to truth alone, are said to be only on a level with antiques of the second class, under the Apollo and Venus, that is, two classes or grades below the Torso. But suppose the best sculptor in the world, possessing the most entire appreciation of the excellence of the Torso, were to sit down, pen in hand, to try and tell us wherein the peculiar truth of each line consisted? Could any words that he could use make us feel the hairbreadth of depth and distance on which all depends? or end in anything more than bare assertions of the inferiority of this line to that, which, if we did not perceive for ourselves, no explanation could ever illustrate to us? He might as well endeavor to explain to us by words some taste or other subject of sense, of which we had no experience. And so it is with all truths of the highest order ; they are separated from those of average precision by points of extreme delicacy, which none but the cultivated eye can in the least feel, and to express which, all words are absolutely meaningless and useless. Consequently, in all that I have been saying of the truth of artists, I have been able to point out only coarse, broad, and explicable matters; I have been perfectly unable to express (and indeed I have made no endeavor to express) the finely drawn and distinguished truth in which all the real excellence of art consists. All those truths which I have been able to explain and demonstrate in Turner, are such as any artist of ordinary powers of observation ought to be capable of rendering. It is disgraceful to omit them; but it is no very great credit to observe them. I have indeed proved that they have been neglected, and disgracefully so, by those men who are commonly considered the Fathers of Art; but in showing that they have been observed by Turner, I have only proved him to be *above* other men in knowledge of truth, I have not given any conception of his own positive rank as a Painter of Nature. But it stands to reason, that the men, who in broad, simple, and demonstrable matters are perpetually violating truth, will not be particularly accurate or careful in carrying out delicate and refined, and undemonstrable matters; and it stands equally to reason, that the man who, as far as argument or demonstration can go, is found invariably truthful, will, in all probability, be truthful to the last line, and shadow of a line. And such is, indeed, the case with every touch of this consummate artist; the essential excellence—all that constitutes the real and exceeding value of his works—is beyond and above expression; it is a truth inherent in every line, and breathing in every hue, too delicate and exquisite to admit of any kind of proof, nor to be ascertained except by the highest of tests—the keen feeling attained by extended knowledge and long study. Two lines are laid on canvas; one is right and another wrong. There is no difference between them appreciable by the compasses—none appreciable by the ordinary eye—none which can be pointed out, if it is not seen. One person feels it,—another does not; but the feeling or sight of the one can by no words be communicated to the other: it would be unjust

§ 3. The *positive* rank of Turner is in no degree shown in the foregoing pages, but only his relative rank.

§ 4. The exceeding refinement of his truth.

if it could, for that feeling and sight have been the reward of years of labor. And there is, indeed, nothing in Turner —not one dot nor line—whose meaning can be understood without knowledge; because he never aims at sensual impressions, but at the deep final truth, which only meditation can discover, and only experience recognize. There is nothing done or omitted by him, which does not imply such a comparison of ends, such rejection of the least worthy, (as far as they are incompatible with the rest,) such careful selection and arrangement of all that can be united, as can only be enjoyed by minds capable of going through the same process, and discovering the reasons for the choice. And, as there is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge, so there is nothing in them which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy. There is no test of our acquaintance with nature so absolute and unfailing as the degree of admiration we feel for Turner's painting. Precisely as we are shallow in our knowledge, vulgar in our feeling, and contracted in our views of principles, will the works of this artist be stumbling-blocks or foolishness to us :—precisely in the degree in which we are familiar with nature, constant in our observation of her, and enlarged in our understanding of her, will they expand before our eyes into glory and beauty. In every new insight which we obtain into the works of God, in every new idea which we receive from His creation, we shall find ourselves possessed of an interpretation and a guide to something in Turner's works which we had not before understood. We may range over Europe, from shore to shore ; and from every rock that we tread upon, every sky that passes over our heads, every local form of vegetation or of soil, we shall receive fresh illustration of his principles—fresh confirmation of his facts. We shall feel, wherever we go, that he has been there before us—whatever we see, that he has seen and seized before us : and we shall at last cease the investigation, with a well-grounded trust, that whatever we have been unable to account for, and what we still dislike in his works, has reason

§ 5. There is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge.

§ 6. And nothing which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy.

for it, and foundation like the rest; and that even where he has failed or erred, there is a beauty in the failure which none are able to equal, and a dignity in the error which none are worthy to reprove.

§ 7. His former rank and progress.

There has been marked and constant progress in his mind; he has not, like some few artists, been without childhood; his course of study has been as evidently as it has been swiftly progressive, and in different stages of the struggle, sometimes one order of truth, sometimes another, has been aimed at or omitted. But from the beginning to the present height of his career, he has never sacrificed a greater truth to a less. As he advanced, the previous knowledge or attainment was absorbed in what succeeded, or abandoned only if incompatible, and never abandoned without a gain; and his present works present the sum and perfection of his accumulated knowledge, delivered with the impatience and passion of one who feels too much, and knows too much, and has too little time to say it in, to pause for expression, or ponder over his syllables. There is in them the obscurity, but the truth, of prophecy; the instinctive and burning language, which would express less if it uttered more, which is indistinct only by its fulness, and dark with its abundant meaning. He feels now, with long-trained vividness and keenness of sense, too bitterly the impotence of the hand, and the vainness of the color to catch one shadow or one image of the glory which God has revealed to him. He has dwelt and communed with nature all the days of his life; he knows her now too well, he cannot palter over the material littleness of her outward form; he must give her soul, or he has done nothing, and he cannot do this with the flax, and the earth, and the oil. "I cannot gather the sunbeams out of the east, or I would make *them* tell you what I have seen; but read this, and interpret this, and let us remember together. I cannot gather the gloom out of the night sky, or I would make that teach you what I have seen; but read this, and interpret this, and let us feel together. And if you have not that within you which I can

§ 8. Standing of his present works. Their mystery is the consequence of their fulness.

summon to my aid, if you have not the sun in your spirit, and the passion in your heart, which my words may awaken, though they be indistinct and swift, leave me; for I will give you no patient mockery, no laborious insult of that glorious nature, whose I am and whom I serve. Let other servants imitate the voice and the gesture of their master, while they forget his message. Hear that message from me; but remember, that the teaching of Divine truth must still be a mystery."

CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION.—MODERN ART AND MODERN CRITICISM.

We have only, in conclusion, to offer a few general remarks respecting modern art and modern criticism.

§ 1. The entire prominence hitherto given to the works of one artist caused only by our not being able to take cognizance of *character*.

We wish, in the first place, to remove the appearance of invidiousness and partiality which the constant prominence given in the present portion of the work to the productions of one artist, can scarcely fail of bearing in the minds of most readers. When we pass to the examination of what is beautiful and expressive in art, we shall frequently find distinctive qualities in the minds even of inferior artists, which have led them to the pursuit and embodying of particular trains of thought, altogether different from those which direct the compositions of other men, and incapable of comparison with them. Now, when this is the case, we should consider it in the highest degree both invidious and illogical, to say of such different modes of exertion of the intellect, that one is in all points greater or nobler than another. We shall probably find something in the working of all minds which has an end and a power peculiar to itself, and which is deserving of free and full admiration, without any reference whatsoever to what has, in other fields, been accomplished by other modes of thought, and directions of aim. We shall, indeed, find a wider range and grasp in one man than in another; but yet it will be our own fault if we do not discover something in the most limited range of mind which is different from, and in its way better than, anything presented to us by the more grasping intellect. We all know that the nightingale sings more nobly than the lark; but who, therefore, would wish the lark not to sing, or would deny that it had a character of its own, which bore a part among the melodies of creation no less essential than that of the more richly-gifted bird? And thus we shall find and feel that whatever difference may exist between the intellectual powers of one artist and another, yet wherever there is any true genius, there will be some peculiar lesson which even the humblest will teach us more sweetly and perfectly than those far above them in prouder attributes of mind; and we should be as mistaken as we should be unjust and invidious, if we refused to receive this their peculiar message with gratitude and veneration, merely because it was a sentence and not a volume. But the case is different when we examine their relative fidelity to given facts. That fidelity depends on no peculiar modes of thought or habits of character; it is the result of keen sensibility, combined with high powers of memory and association. These qualities, as such, are the same in all men; character or feeling may direct their choice to this or that object, but the fidelity with which they treat either the one or the other, is dependent on those simple powers of sense and intellect which are like and comparable in all, and of which we can always say that they are greater in this man, or less in that without reference to the character of the individual. Those feelings which direct Cox to the painting of wild, weedy banks, and cool, melting skies, and those which directed Barret to the painting of glowing foliage and melancholy twilight, are both just and beautiful in their way, and are both worthy of high praise and gratitude, without necessity, nay, without *proper* possibility of comparing one with the other. But the degree of fidelity with which the leaves of the one and the light of the other are rendered, depends upon faculties of sight, sense,

§ 2. The feelings of different artists are incapable of full comparison.

§ 3. But the fidelity and truth of each are capable of real comparison.

and memory common to both, and perfectly comparable ; and we may say fearlessly, and without injustice, that one or the other, as the case may be, is more faithful in that which they have chosen to represent. It is also to be remembered that these faculties of sense and memory are not partial in their effect; they will not induce fidelity in the rendering of one class of object, and fail of doing so in another. They act equally, and with equal results, whatever may be the matter subjected to them ; the same delicate sense which perceives the utmost grace of the fibres of a tree, will be equally unerring in tracing the character of cloud ; and the quick memory which seizes and retains the circumstances of a flying effect of shadow or color, will be equally effectual in fixing the impression of the instantaneous form of a moving figure or a breaking wave. There are indeed one or two broad distinctions in the nature of the senses,—a sensibility to color, for instance, being very different from a sensibility to form ; so that a man may possess one without the other, and an artist may succeed in mere imitation of what is before him, of air, sunlight, etc., without possessing sensibility at all. But wherever we have, in the drawing of any one object, sufficient evidence of real intellectual power, of the sense which perceives the essential qualities of a thing, and the judgment which arranges them so as to illustrate each other, we may be quite certain that the same sense and judgment will operate equally on whatever is subjected to them, and that the artist will be equally great and masterly in his drawing of all that he attempts. Hence we may be quite sure that wherever an artist appears to be truthful in one branch of art, and not in another, the apparent truth is either owing to some trickery of imitation, or is not so great as we suppose it to be. In nine cases out of ten, people who are celebrated for drawing only one thing, and *can* only draw one thing, draw that one thing worse than anybody else. An artist may indeed confine himself to a limited range of subject, but if he be really true in his rendering of this, his power of doing more will be perpetually

§ 4. Especially because they are equally manifested in the treatment of all subjects.

§ 5. No man draws one thing well, if he can draw nothing else.

showing itself in accessories and minor points. There are few men, for instance, more limited in subject than Hunt, and yet I do not think there is another man in the old Water-Color Society, with so keen an eye for truth, or with power so universal. And this is the reason for the exceeding prominence which in the foregoing investigation one or two artists have always assumed over the rest, for the habits of accurate observation and delicate powers of hand which they possess, have equal effect, and maintain the same superiority in their works, to whatever class of subject they may be directed. And thus we have been compelled, however unwillingly, to pass hastily by the works of many gifted men, because, however pure their feeling, or original their conceptions, they were wanting in those faculties of the hand and mind which insure perfect fidelity to nature: it will be only hereafter, when we are at liberty to take full cognizance of the thought, however feebly it may be clothed in language, that we shall be able to do real justice to the disciples either of modern or of ancient art.

§ 6. General conclusions to be derived from our past investigation.

But as far as we have gone at present, and with respect only to the *material* truth, which is all that we have been able to investigate, the conclusion to which we must be led is as clear as it is inevitable; that modern artists, as a body, are far more just and full in their views of material things than any landscape painters whose works are extant—but that J. M. W. Turner is the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the whole system of nature, and is, in this point of view, the only perfect landscape painter whom the world has ever seen.

§ 7. Truth, a standard of all excellence.

Nor are we disposed to recede from our assertion made in Sec. I. Ch. I. § 10, that this material truth is indeed a perfect test of the relative rank of painters, though it does not in itself constitute that rank. We shall be able to prove that truth and beauty, knowledge and imagination, invariably are associated in art; and we shall be able to show that not only in truth to nature, but in all other points, Turner is the greatest landscape painter who has ever lived. But his superiority is, in matters of feeling, one of kind, not of degree. Superiority of degree implies a superseding of others, superiority of kind only sustaining a more important, but not more necessary part, than others. If *truth* were all that we required from art, all other painters might cast aside their brushes in despair, for all that they have done he has done more fully and accurately; but when we pass to the higher requirements of art, beauty and character, their contributions are all equally necessary and desirable, because different, and however inferior in position or rank, are still perfect of their kind; their inferiority is only that of the lark to the nightingale, or of the violet to the rose.

Such then is the rank and standing of our modern artists. We have, living with us, and painting for us, the greatest painter of *all* time; a man with whose supremacy of power no intellect of past ages can be put in comparison for a moment. Let us next inquire what is the rank of our critics.

§ 8. Modern criticism. Changefulness of public taste.

Public taste, I believe, as far as it is the encourager and supporter of art has been the same in all ages,—a fitful and vacillating current of vague impression, perpetually liable to change, subject to epidemic desires, and agitated by infectious passion, the slave of fashion, and the fool of fancy, but yet always distinguishing with singular clearsightedness, between that which is best and that which is worst of the particular class of food which its morbid appetite may call for; never failing to distinguish that which is produced by intellect, from that which is not, though it may be intellect degraded by ministering to its misguided will. Public taste may thus degrade a race of men capable of the highest efforts in art into the portrait painters of ephemeral fashions, but it will yet not fail of discovering who, among these portrait painters, is the man of most mind. It will separate the man who would have become Buonaroti from the man who would have become Bandinelli, though it will employ both in painting curls, and feathers, and bracelets. Hence, generally speaking, there is no *comparative* injustice done, no false elevation of the fool above the man of

§ 9. Yet associated with a certain degree of judgment.

mind, provided only that the man of mind will condescend to supply the particular article which the public chooses to want. Of course a thousand modifying circumstances interfere with the action of the general rule; but, taking one case with another, twe shall very constantly find the price which the picture commands in the market a pretty fair standard of the artist's rank of intellect.

§ 10. Duty of the press.

The press, therefore, and all who pretend to lead the public taste, have not so much to direct the multitude whom to go to, as what to ask for. Their business is not to tell us which is our best painter, but to tell us whether we are making our best painter do his best.

§ 11. Qualifications necessary for discharging it.

Now none are capable of doing this, but those whose principles of judgment are based both on thorough *practical* knowledge of art, and on broad general views of what is true and right, without reference to what has been done at one time or another, or in one school or another. Nothing can be more perilous to the cause of art, than the constant ringing in our painters' ears of the names of great predecessors, as their examples or masters. I had rather hear a great poet, entirely original in his feeling and aim, rebuked or maligned for not being like Wordsworth or Coleridge, than a great painter criticised for not putting us in mind of Claude or Poussin. But such references to former excellence are the only refuge and resource of persons endeavoring to be critics without being artists. They cannot tell you whether a thing is right or not; but they can tell you whether it is like something else or not.

§ 12. General incapability of modern critics.

And the whole tone of modern criticism —as far as it is worthy of being called criticism —sufficiently shows it to proceed entirely from persons altogether unversed in practice, and ignorant of truth, but possessing just enough of feeling to enjoy the solemnity of ancient art, who, not distinguishing that which is really exalted and valuable in the modern school, nor having any just idea of the real ends or capabilities of landscape art, consider nothing right which is not based on the conventional principles of the ancients, and nothing true which nas more of nature in it than of Claude. But it is strange that while the noble and unequalled works of modern landscape painters are thus maligned and misunderstood, our historical painters—such as we have —are permitted to pander more fatally every year to the vicious English taste, which can enjoy nothing but what is theatrical, entirely unchastised, nay, encouraged and lauded by the very men who endeavor to hamper our great landscape painters with rules derived from consecrated blunders. The very critic who has just passed one of the noblest works of Turner—that is to say, a masterpiece of art, to which Time can show no parallel—with a ribald jest, will yet stand gaping in admiration before the next piece of dramatic glitter and grimace, suggested by the society, and adorned with the appurtenances of the greenroom, which he finds hung low upon the wall as a brilliant example of the ideal of English art. It is natural enough indeed, that the persons who are disgusted by what is pure and noble, should be delighted with what is vicious and degraded; but it is singular that those who are constantly talking of Claude and Poussin, should never even pretend to a thought of Raffaelle. We could excuse them for not comprehending Turner, if they only would apply the same cut-and-dried criticisms where they might be applied with truth, and productive of benefit; but we endure not the paltry compound of ignorance, false taste, and pretension, which assumes the dignity of classical feeling, that it may be able to abuse whatever is above the level of its understanding, but bursts into genuine rapture with all that is meretricious, if sufficiently adapted to the calibre of its comprehension.

§ 13. And inconsistency with themselves.

To notice such criticisms, however, is giving them far more importance than they deserve. They can lead none astray but those whose opinions are absolutely valueless, and we did not begin this chapter with any intent of wasting our time on these small critics, but in the hope of pointing out to the periodical press what kind of criticism is now most required by our school of landscape art, and how it may be in their power, if they will, to regulate

§ 14. How the press may really advance the cause of art.

its impulses, without checking its energies, and really to advance both the cause of the artist, and the taste of the public.

§ 15. Morbid fondness at the present day for unfinished works.

One of the most morbid symptoms of the general taste of the present day, is a too great fondness for unfinished works. Brilliancy and rapidity of execution are everywhere sought as the highest good, and so that a picture be cleverly handled as far as it is carried, little regard is paid to its imperfection as a whole. Hence some artists are permitted, and others compelled, to confine themselves to a manner of working altogether destructive of their powers, and to tax their energies, not to concentrate the greatest quantity of thought on the least possible space of canvas, but to produce the greatest quantity of glitter and claptrap in the shortest possible time. To the idler and the trickster in art, no system can be more advantageous; but to the man who is really desirous of doing something worth having lived for—to a man of industry, energy, or feeling, we believe it to be the cause of the most bitter discouragement. If ever, working upon a favorite subject or a beloved idea, he is induced to tax his powers to the utmost, and to spend as much time upon his picture as he feels necessary for its perfection, he will not be able to get so high a price for the result, perhaps, of a twelvemonth's thought, as he might have obtained for half-a-dozen sketches with a forenoon's work in each, and he is compelled either to fall back upon mechanism, or to starve. Now the press should especially endeavor to convince the public, that by this purchase of imperfect pictures they not only prevent all progress and development of high talent, and set tricksters and mechanics on a level with men of mind, but defraud and injure themselves. For there is no doubt whatever, that, estimated merely by the quantity of pleasure it is capable of conveying, a well-finished picture is worth to its possessor half-a-dozen incomplete ones; and that a perfect drawing is, simply as a source of delight, better worth a hundred guineas than a drawing half as finished is worth thirty. On the other hand, the body of our artists should be kept in mind, that

§ 16. By which the public defraud themselves.

§ 17. And in pandering to which artists ruin themselves.

by indulging the public with rapid and unconsidered work, they are not only depriving themselves of the benefit which each picture ought to render to them, as a piece of practice and study, but they are destroying the refinement of general taste, and rendering it impossible for themselves ever to find a market for more careful works, supposing that they were inclined to execute them. Nor need any single artist be afraid of setting the example, and producing labored works, at advanced prices, among the cheap, quick drawings of the day. The public will soon find the value of the complete work, and will be more ready to give a large sum for that which is inexhaustible, than a quota of it for that which they are wearied of in a month. The artist who never lets the price command the picture, will soon find the picture command the price. And it ought to be a rule with every painter never to let a picture leave his easel while it is yet capable of improvement, or of having more thought put into it. The general effect is often perfect and pleasing, and not to be improved upon, when the details and facts are altogether imperfect and unsatisfactory. It may be difficult—perhaps the most difficult task of art—to complete these details, and not to hurt the general effect; but until the artist can do this, his art is imperfect and his picture unfinished. That only is a complete picture which has both the general wholeness and effect of nature, and the inexhaustible perfection of nature's details. And it is only in the effort to unite these that a painter really improves. By aiming only at details, he becomes a mechanic; by aiming only at generals, he becomes a trickster: his fall in both cases is sure. Two questions the artist has, therefore, always to ask himself,—first, "Is my whole right?" Secondly, "Can my details be added to? Is there a single space in the picture where I can crowd in another thought? Is there a curve in it which I can modulate—a line which I can graduate—a vacancy I can fill? Is there a single spot which the eye, by any peering or prying, can fathom or exhaust? If so, my picture is imperfect; and if, in modulating the line or filling the vacancy, I hurt the general effect, my art is imperfect."

§ 18. Necessity of finishing works of art perfectly.

But, on the other hand, though incomplete pictures ought neither to be produced nor purchased, careful and real *sketches* ought to be valued much more highly than they are. Studies in chalk, of landscape, should form a part of every Exhibition, and a room should be allotted to drawings and designs of figures in the Academy. We should be heartily glad to see the room which is now devoted to bad drawings of incorporeal and imaginary architecture—of things which never were, and which, thank Heaven! never will be—occupied instead, by careful studies for historical pictures; not blots of chiaroscuro, but delicate outlines with the pen or crayon.

§ 19. *Sketches* not sufficiently encouraged.

From young artists, in landscape, nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bona fide imitation* of nature. They have no business to ape the execution of masters,—to utter weak and disjointed repetitions of other men's words, and mimic the gestures of the preacher, without understanding his meaning or sharing in his emotions. We do not want their crude ideas of composition, their unformed conceptions of the Beautiful, their unsystematized experiments upon the Sublime. We scorn their velocity; for it is without direction: we reject their decision; for it is without grounds: we contemn their composition; for it is without materials: we reprobate their choice; for it is without comparison. Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize; but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of nature, and tracing the finger of God. Nothing is so bad a symptom, in the work of young artists, as too much dexterity of handling; for it is a sign that they are satisfied with their work, and have tried to do nothing more than they were able to do. Their work should be full of failures; for these are the signs of efforts. They should keep to quiet colors—grays and browns; and, making the early works of Turner their example, as his latest are to be their object of emulation, should go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her mean-

§ 20. Brilliancy of execution or efforts at invention not to be tolerated in young artists.

§ 21. The duty and after privileges of all students.

ing, and remember her instruction, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth. Then, when their memories are stored, and their imaginations fed, and their hands firm, let them take up the scarlet and the gold, give the reins to their fancy, and show us what their heads are made of. We will follow them wherever they choose to lead; we will check at nothing; they are then our masters, and are fit to be so. They have placed themselves above our criticism, and we will listen to their words in all faith and humility; but not unless they themselves have before bowed, in the same submission, to a higher Authority and Master.

§ 22. Necessity among our greater artists of more singleness of aim.

Among our greater artists, the chief want, at the present day, is that of *solemnity* and definite purpose. We have too much picture-manufacturing, too much making up of lay figures with a certain quantity of foliage, and a certain quantity of sky, and a certain quantity of water,—a little bit of all that is pretty, a little sun, and a little shade,—a touch of pink, and a touch of blue,—a little sentiment, and a little sublimity, and a little humor, and a little antiquarianism,—all very neatly associated in a very charming picture, but not working together for a definite end. Or if the aim be higher, as was the case with Barret and Varley, we are generally put off with stale repetitions of eternal composition; a great tree, and some goats, and a bridge and a lake, and the temple at Tivoli, etc. Now we should like to see our artists working out, with all exertion of their concentrated powers, such marked pieces of landscape character as might bear upon them the impression of solemn, earnest, and pervading thought, definitely directed, and aided by every accessory of detail, color, and idealized form, which the disciplined feeling, accumulated knowledge, and unspared labor of the painter could supply. I have alluded, in the second preface, to the deficiency of our modern artists in these great points of earnestness and completeness; and I revert to it, in conclusion, as their paramount failing, and one fatal in many ways to the interests of art. Our landscapes are all descriptive, not reflective, agreeable and conversational, but not impressive nor didactic. They have no other foundation than

> "That vivacious versatility,
> Which many people take for want of heart.
> They err; 'tis merely what is called 'mobility;'
> A thing of temperament, and *not of art*,
> *Though seeming so from its supposed facility.*
>
> . . . .
>
> This makes your actors, *artists*, and romancers;
> Little that's great—but much of what is clever."

Only it is to be observed that—in painters—this vivacity is *not* always versatile. It is to be wished that it were, but it is no such easy matter to be versatile in painting. Shallowness of thought insures not its variety, nor rapidity of production its originality. Whatever may be the case in literature, facility is in art inconsistent with invention. The artist who covers most canvas always shows, even in the sum of his works, the least expenditure of thought.* I have never seen more than four works of John Lewis on the walls of the Water-Color Exhibition; I have counted forty from other hands; but have found in the end that the forty were a multiplication of one, and the four a concentration of forty. And therefore I would earnestly plead with all our artists, that they should make it a law *never* to repeat themselves; for he who never repeats himself will not produce an inordinate number of pictures, and he who limits himself in number gives himself at least the opportunity of completion. Besides, all repetition is degradation of the art; it reduces it from headwork to handwork; and indicates something like a persuasion on the part of the artist that nature is exhaustible or art perfectible; perhaps, even, by him exhausted and perfected. All copyists are contemptible, but the copyist of himself the most so, for he has the worst original.

Let then every picture be painted with earnest intention of impressing on the spectator some elevated emotion, and exhibiting to him some one particular, but exalted, beauty.

---

* Of course this assertion does not refer to the differences in mode of execution, which enable one painter to work faster or slower than another, but only to the exertion of mind, commonly manifested by the artist, according as he is sparing or prodigal of production.

§ 23. What should be their general aim.

Let a real subject be carefully selected, in itself suggestive of, and replete with, this feeling and beauty; let an effect of light and color be taken which may harmonize with both; and a sky, not invented, but recollected, (in fact, all so-called invention is in landscape nothing more than appropriate recollection—good in proportion as it is distinct.) Then let the details of the foreground be separately studied, especially those plants which appear peculiar to the place: if any one, however unimportant, occurs there, which occurs not elsewhere, it should occupy a prominent position; for the other details, the highest examples of the ideal forms* or characters which he requires are to be selected by the artist from his former studies, or fresh studies made expressly for the purpose, leaving as little as possible—nothing, in fact, beyond their connection and arrangement—to mere imagination. Finally, when his picture is thus perfectly realized in all its parts, let him dash as much of it out as he likes ; throw, if he will, mist around it—darkness—or dazzling and confused light—whatever, in fact, impetuous feeling or vigorous imagination may dictate or desire ; the forms, once so laboriously realized, will come out whenever they *do* occur with a startling and impressive truth, which the uncertainty in which they are veiled will enhance rather than diminish ; and the imagination, strengthened by discipline and fed with truth, will achieve the utmost of creation that is possible to finite mind.

---

* "Talk of improving nature when it *is* nature—Nonsense."—*E. V. Rippingille.* I have not yet spoken of the difference—even in what we commonly call Nature—between imperfect and ideal form: the study of this difficult question must, of course, be deferred until we have examined the nature of our impressions of beauty; but it may not be out of place here to hint at the want of care in many of our artists to distinguish between the real work of nature and the diseased results of man's interference with her. Many of the works of our greatest artists have for their subjects nothing but hacked and hewn remnants of farm yard vegetation, branded root and branch, from their birth, by the prong and the pruning-hook; and the feelings once accustomed to take pleasure in such abortions, can scarcely become perceptive of forms truly ideal. I have just said (182) that young painters should go to nature trustingly,—rejecting nothing, and selecting nothing: so they should; but they must be careful that it *is* nature to whom they go—nature in her liberty—not as servant-of-all-work in the hands of the agriculturist, nor stiffened into court-dress by the landscape gardener. It must be the pure, wild volition and energy of the creation which they follow—not subdued to the furrow, and cicatrized to the pollard – not persuaded into proprieties, nor pampered into diseases. Let them work by the torrent-side, and in the forest shadows; not by purling brooks and under "tonsile shades." It is impossible to enter here into discussion of what man can or cannot do, by assisting natural operations: it is an intricate question: nor can I, without anticipating what I shall have hereafter to advance, show how or why it happens that the racehorse is *not* the artist's ideal of a horse, nor a prize tulip his ideal of a flower; but so it is. As far as the painter is concerned, man never touches nature but to spoil;—he operates on her as a barber

The artist who thus works will soon find that he cannot repeat himself if he would ; that new fields of exertion, new subjects of contemplation open to him in nature day by day,

would on the Apollo ; and if he sometimes increases some particular power or excellence,—strength or agility in the animal—tallness, or fruitfulness, or solidity in the tree,—he invariably loses that *balance* of good qualities which is the chief sign of perfect specific form ; above all, he destroys the appearance of free *volition* and *felicity*, which, as I shall show hereafter, is one of the essential characters of organic beauty. Until, however, I can enter into the discussion of the nature of beauty, the only advice I can safely give the young painter, is to keep clear of clover-fields and parks, and to hold to the unpenetrated forest and the unfurrowed hill. There he will find that every influence is noble, even when destructive—that decay itself is beautiful,—and that, in the elaborate and lovely composition of all things, if at first sight it seems less studied than the works of men, the appearance of Art is only prevented by the presence of Power.

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her : 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."

WORDSWORTH.

and that, while others lament the weakness of their invention, *he* has nothing to lament but the shortness of life.

§ 24. Duty of the press with respect to the works of Turner.

And now but one word more, respecting the great artist whose works have formed the chief subject of this treatise. All the *greatest* qualities of those works—all that is mental in them, has not yet been so much as touched upon. None but their lightest and least essential excellences have been proved, and, therefore, the enthusiasm with which I speak of them must necessarily appear overcharged and absurd. It might, perhaps, have been more prudent to have withheld the full expression of it till I had shown the full grounds for it; but once written, such expression must remain till I have justified it. And, indeed, I think there is enough, even in the foregoing pages, to show that these works are, as far as concerns the ordinary critics of the press, above all animadversion, and above all praise; and that, by the public, they are not to be received as in any way subjects or matters of opinion, but of Faith. We are not to approach them to be pleased, but to be taught; not to form a judgment, but to receive a lesson. Our periodical writers, therefore, may save themselves the trouble either of blaming or praising: their duty is not to pronounce opinions upon the work of a man who has walked with nature threescore years; but to impress upon the public the respect with which they are to be received, and to make request to him, on the part of the people of England, that he would now touch no unimportant work—that he would not spend time on slight or small pictures, but give to the nation a series of grand, consistent, systematic, and completed poems. We desire that he should follow out his own thoughts and intents of heart, without reference to any human authority. But we request, in all humility, that those thoughts may be seriously and loftily given; and that the whole power of his unequalled intellect may be exerted in the production of such works as may remain forever for the teaching of the nations. In all that he says, we believe; in all that he does we trust.* It is therefore that we pray him to utter nothing lightly—to do nothing regardlessly. He stands upon an eminence, from which he looks back over the universe of God, and forward over the generations of men. Let every work of his hand be a history of the one, and a lesson to the other. Let each exertion of his mighty mind be both hymn and prophecy,—adoration to the Deity,—revelation to mankind.

---

* It has been hinted, in some of the reviews of the Second Volume of this work, that the writer's respect for Turner has diminished since the

POSTSCRIPT.

The above passage was written in the year 1843 ; too late. It is true that soon after the publication of this work, the abuse of the press, which had been directed against Turner with unceasing virulence during the production of his noblest works, sank into timid animadversion, or changed into unintelligent praise ; but not before illness, and, in some degree, mortification, had enfeebled the hand and chilled the heart of the painter.

This year (1851) he has no picture on the walls of the Academy ; and the *Times* of May 3d says, " We miss those works of INSPIRATION ! "

above passage was written. He would, indeed, have been deserving of little attention if, with the boldness manifested on the preceding pages, he had advanced opinions based on so shallow foundation as that the course of three years could affect modification of them. He was justified by the sudden accession of power which the great artist exhibited at the period when this volume was first published, as well as by the low standard of the criticism to which he was subjected, in claiming, with respect to his then works, a submission of judgment, greater indeed than may generally be accorded to even the highest human intellect, yet not greater than such a master might legitimately claim from such critics ; and the cause of the peculiar form of advocacy into which the preceding chapters necessarily fell, has been already stated more than once. In the following sections it became necessary as they treated a subject of intricate relations, and peculiar difficulty, to obtain a more general view of the scope and operation of art, and to avoid all conclusions in any wise referable to the study of particular painters. The reader will therefore find, not that lower rank is attributed to Turner, but that he is now compared with the greatest men, and occupies his true position among the most noble of all time.

We miss! Who misses?—The populace of England rolls by to weary itself in the great bazaar of Kensington, little thinking that a day will come when those veiled vestals and prancing amazons, and goodly merchandise of precious stones and gold, will all be forgotten as though they had not been, but that the light which has faded from the walls of the Academy is one which a million of Koh-i-Noors could not rekindle, and that the year 1851 will in the far future be remembered less for what it has displayed than for what it has withdrawn.

DENMARK HILL, *June*, **1851.**

PART III.

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

SECTION I.

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE RANK AND RELATIONS OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

§ 1. With what care the subject is to be approached.

ALTHOUGH the hasty execution and controversial tone of the former portions of this essay have been subjects of frequent regret to the writer, yet the one was in some measure excusable in a work referred to a temporary end, and the other unavoidable, in one directed against particular opinions. Nor are either of any necessary detriment to its availableness as a foundation for more careful and extended survey, in so far as its province was confined to the assertion of obvious and visible facts, the verification of which could in no degree be dependent either on the care with which they might be classed, or the temper in which they were regarded. Not so with respect to the investigation now before us, which, being not of things outward, and sensibly demonstrable, but of the value and meaning of mental impressions, must be entered upon with a modesty and cautiousness proportioned to the difficulty of determining the likeness, or community of such impressions, as they are received by different men, and with seriousness proportioned to the importance of rightly regarding those faculties over which we have moral power, and therefore in relation to which we assuredly incur a moral responsibility. There is not the thing left to the choice of man to do or not to do, but there is some sort of degree of duty involved in his determination ; and by how much the more, therefore, our subject becomes embarrassed by the cross influences of variously admitted passion, administered discipline, or encouraged affection, upon the minds of men, by so much the more it becomes matter of weight and import to observe by what laws we should be guided, and of what responsibilities regardful, in all that we admit, administer, or encourage.

§ 2. And of what importance considered.

Nor indeed have I ever, even in the preceding sections, spoken with levity, though sometimes perhaps with rashness. I have never treated the subject as other than demanding heedful and serious examination, and taking high place among those which justify as they reward our utmost ardor and earnestness of pursuit. That it justifies them must be my present task to prove ; that it demands them has never been doubted. Art, properly so called, is no recreation ; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables ; no relief of the ennui of boudoirs ; it must be understood and undertaken seriously or not at all. To advance it men's lives must be given, and to receive it their hearts. "Le peintre Rubens s' amuse à être ambassadeur," said one with whom, but for his own words, we might have thought that effort had been absorbed in power, and the labor of his art in its felicity.—" E faticoso lo studio della pittura, et sempre si fa il mare maggiore," said he, who of all men was least likely to have left us discouraging report of anything that majesty of intellect could grasp, or continuity of labor overcome.* But that this labor, the necessity of which in all ages has been most frankly admitted by the greatest men, is justifiable in a moral point of view, that it is not the pouring out of men's lives upon the ground, that it has functions of usefulness addressed to the weightiest of human interests, and that the objects of it have calls upon us which it is inconsistent alike with our human dignity and our heavenward duty to disobey—has never been boldly asserted nor fairly admitted ; least of all is it likely to be so in these days of dispatch and display, where vanity, on the one side, supplies the place of that love of art which is the only effective patronage, and on the other, of the incorruptible and earnest pride which no applause, no reprobation, can blind to its shortcomings nor beguile of its hope.

---

* Tintoret. (Ridolfi. Vita.)

And yet it is in the expectation of obtaining at least a partial acknowledgment of this, as a truth influential both of aim and conduct, that I enter upon the second division of my subject. The time I have already devoted to the task I should have considered altogether inordinate, and that which I fear may be yet required for its completion would have been cause to me of utter discouragement, but that the object I propose to myself is of no partial nor accidental importance. It is not now to distinguish between disputed degrees of ability in individuals, or agreeableness in canvases, it is not now to expose the ignorance or defend the principles of party or person. It is to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the use, force, and function of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires, and to elevate to its healthy and beneficial operation that art which, being altogether addressed to them, rises or falls with their variableness of vigor,—now leading them with Tyrtæan fire, now singing them to sleep with baby murmurings.

§ 3. The doubtful force of the term "utility."

Only as I fear that with many of us the recommendation of our own favorite pursuits is rooted more in conceit of ourselves, than affection towards others, so that sometimes in our very pointing of the way, we had rather that the intricacy of it should be admired than unfolded, whence a natural distrust of such recommendation may well have place in the minds of those who have not yet perceived any value in the thing praised, and because also, men in the present century understand the word Useful in a strange way, or at least (for the word has been often so accepted from the beginning of time) since in these days, they act its more limited meaning farther out, and give to it more practical weight and authority, it will be well in the outset that I define exactly what kind of utility I mean to attribute to art, and especially to that branch of it which is concerned with those impressions of external beauty whose nature it is our present object to discover.

§ 4. Its proper sense.

That is to everything created, pre-eminently useful, which enables it rightly and fully to perform the functions appointed to it by its Creator. Therefore, that we may determine what is chiefly useful to man, it is necessary first to determine the use of man himself.

Man's use and function (and let him who will not grant me this follow me no farther, for this I propose always to assume) is to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness.

Whatever enables us to fulfil this function, is in the pure and first sense of the word useful to us. Pre-eminently therefore whatever sets the glory of God more brightly before us. But things that only help us to exist, are in a secondary and mean sense, useful, or rather, if they be looked for alone, they are useless and worse, for it would be better that we should not exist, than that we should guiltily disappoint the purposes of existence.

§ 5. How falsely applied in these times.

And yet people speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as if houses, and lands, and food, and raiment were alone useful, and as if sight, thought, and admiration,* were all profitless, so that men insolently call themselves Utilitarians, who would turn, if they had their way, themselves and their race into vegetables; men who think, as far as such can be said to think, that the meat is more than the life, and the raiment than the body, who look to the earth as a stable, and to its fruit as fodder; vinedressers and husbandmen, who love the corn they grind, and the grapes they crush, better than the gardens of the angels upon the slopes of Eden; hewers of wood and drawers of water, who think that the wood they hew and the water they draw, are better than the pine-forests that cover the mountains like the shadow of God, and than the great rivers that move like his eternity. And so comes upon us that woe of the preacher, that though God "hath made everything beautiful in his time, also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

---

* We live by admiration, hope, and love. (Excursion, Book IV.)

§ 6. The evil consequences of such interpretation. How connected with national power.

This Nebuchadnezzar curse, that sends us to grass like oxen, seems to follow but too closely on the excess or continuance of national power and peace. In the perplexities of nations, in their struggles for existence, in their infancy, their impotence, or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions. Out of the suffering comes the serious mind; out of the salvation, the grateful heart; out of the endurance, the fortitude; out of the deliverance, the faith; but now when they have learned to live under providence of laws, and with decency and justice of regard for each other; and when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem arising out of their rest, evils that vex less and mortify more, that suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart though they do not torture it. And deep though the causes of thankfulness must be to every people at peace with others and at unity in itself, there are causes of fear also, a fear greater than of sword and sedition; that dependence on God may be forgotten because the bread is given and the water is sure, that gratitude to him may cease because his constancy of protection has taken the semblance of a natural law, that heavenly hope may grow faint amidst the full fruition of the world, that selfishness may take place of undemanded devotion, compassion be lost in vain-glory, and love in dissimulation,* that enervation may succeed to strength, apathy to patience, and the noise of jesting words and foulness of dark thoughts, to the earnest purity of the girded loins and the burning lamp. About the river of human life there is a wintry wind, though a heavenly sunshine; the iris colors its agitation, the frost fixes upon its repose. Let us beware that our rest become not the rest of stones, which so long as they are torrent-tossed, and thunder-stricken, maintain their majesty, but when the stream is silent, and the storm passed, suffer the grass to cover them and the lichen to feed on them, and are ploughed down into dust.

---

* Rom. xii. 9.

§ 7 How to be averted.

And though I believe that we have salt enough of ardent and holy mind amongst us to keep us in some measure from this moral decay, yet the signs of it must be watched with anxiety, in all matter however trivial, in all directions however distant. And at this time, when the iron roads are tearing up the surface of Europe, as grape-shot do the sea, when their great sagene is drawing and twitching the ancient frame and strength of England together, contracting all its various life, its rocky arms and rural heart, into a narrow, finite, calculating metropolis of manufactures, when there is not a monument throughout the cities of Europe, that speaks of old years and mighty people, but it is being swept away to build cafés and gaming-houses;* when the honor of God is thought to con-

---

* The extent of ravage among works of art, or of historical interest, continually committing throughout the continent may, perhaps, be in some measure estimated from the following facts, to which the experience of every traveller may add indefinitely:

At Beauvois—The magnificent old houses supported on columns of workmanship (so far as I recollect) unique in the north of France, at the corner of the market-place, have recently been destroyed for the enlarging of some ironmongery and grocery warehouses. The arch across the street leading to the cathedral has been destroyed also, for what purpose, I know not.

At Rouen—The last of the characteristic houses on the quay is now disappearing. When I was last there, I witnessed the destruction of the noble gothic portal of the church of St. Nicholas, whose position interfered with the courtyard of an hotel; the greater part of the ancient churches are used as smithies, or warehouses for goods. So sist in the poverty of his temple, and the column is shortened, and the pinnacle shattered, the color denied to the casement, and the marble to the altar, while exchequers are

also at Tours (St. Julien). One of the most interesting and superb pieces of middle-age domestic architecture in Europe, opposite the west front of the cathedral, is occupied as a café, and its lower story concealed by painted wainscotings; representing, if I recollect right, twopenny rolls surrounded by circles of admiring cherubs.

At Geneva—The wooden projections or loggias which were once the characteristic feature of the city, have been entirely removed within the last ten years.

At Pisa—The old Baptistery is at this present time in process of being "restored," that is, dashed to pieces, and common stone painted black and varnished, substituted for its black marble. In the Campo Santo, the invaluable frescoes, which might be protected by merely glazing the arcades, are left exposed to wind and weather. While I was there last year I saw a monument put up against the lower part of the wall, to some private person; the bricklayers knocked out a large space of the lower brickwork, with what beneficial effect to the loose and blistered stucco on which the frescoes are painted above, I leave the reader to imagine; inserted the tablet, and then plastered over the marks of the insertion, destroying a portion of the border of one of the paintings. The greater part of Giotto's "Satan before God," has been destroyed by the recent insertion of one of the beams of the roof.

The tomb of Antonio Puccinello, which was the last actually put up against the frescoes, and which destroyed the terminal subject of the Giotto series, bears date 1808.

It has been proposed (or at least it is so reported) that the church of La Spina should be destroyed in order to widen the quay.

At Florence—One of the most important and characteristic streets, that in which stands the church of Or San Michele, has been within the last five years entirely destroyed and rebuilt in the French style; consisting now almost exclusively of shops of bijouterie and parfumerie. Owing to this direction of public funds, the fronts of the Duomo, Santa Croce, St. Lorenzo, and half the others in Florence remain in their original bricks.

The old refectory of Santa Croce, containing an invaluable Cenacolo, if not by Giotto, at least one of the finest works of his school, is used as a carpet manufactory. In order to see the fresco, I had to get on the top of a loom. The *cenacolo* (of Raffaelle?) recently discovered, I saw when the refectory it adorns was used as a coach-house. The fresco, which gave Raffaelle the idea of the Christ of the Transfiguration, is in an old wood shed at San Miniato, concealed behind a heap of faggots. In June, last year, I saw Gentile de Fabriano's picture of the Adoraexhausted in luxury of boudoirs, and pride of reception-rooms; when we ravage without a pause all the loveliness of creation which God in giving pronounced good, and destroy without a thought all those labors which men have given their lives, and their sons' sons' lives to complete, and have left for a legacy to all their kind, a legacy of more than their hearts' blood, for it is of their souls' travail, there is need, bitter need, to bring back, if we may, into men's minds, that to live is nothing, unless to live be to know Him by whom we live, and that he is not to be known by marring his fair works, and blotting out the evidence of his influences upon his creatures, not amid the hurry of crowds and crash of innovation, but in solitary places, and out of the glowing in-

tion of the Magi, belonging to the Academy of Florence, put face upmost in a shower of rain in an open cart; on my suggesting the possibility of the rain hurting it, an old piece of matting was thrown over its face, and it was wheeled away "per essere pulita." What fate this signified, is best to be discovered from the large Perugino in the Academy; whose divine distant landscape is now almost concealed by the mass of French ultramarine, painted over it apparently with a common house brush, by the picture cleaner.

Not to detain the reader by going through the cities of Italy, I will only further mention, that at Padua, the rain beats through the west window of the Arena chapel, and runs down *over* the frescoes. That at Venice, in September last, I saw three buckets set in the scuola di San Rocco to catch the rain which came *through* the *canvases* of Tintoret on the roof; and that while the old works of art are left thus unprotected, the palaces are being restored in the following modes. The English residents knock out bow windows to see up and down the canal. The Italians paint all the *marble* white or cream color, stucco the fronts, and paint them in blue and white stripes to imitate alabaster. (This has been done with Danieli's hotel, with the north angle of the church of St. Mark, there replacing the real alabasters which have been torn down, with a noble old house in St. Mark's place, and with several in the narrow canals.) The marbles of St. Mark's, and carvings, are being *scraped* down to make them look bright—the lower arcade of the Doge's palace is whitewashed—the entrance porch is being restored—the operation having already proceeded so far as the knocking off of the heads of the old statues—an iron railing painted black and yellow has been put round the court. Faded tapestries, and lottery tickets (the latter for the benefit of charitable institutions) are exposed for sale in the council chambers.

telligences which he gave to men of old. He did not teach them how to build for glory and for beauty, he did not give them the fearless, faithful, inherited energies that worked on and down from death to death, generation after generation, that we, foul and sensual as we are, might give the carved work of their poured-out spirit to the axe and the hammer; he has not cloven the earth with rivers, that their white wild waves might turn wheels and push paddles, nor turned it up under as it were fire, that it might heat wells and cure diseases; he brings not up his quails by the east wind, only to let them fall in flesh about the camp of men: he has not heaped the rocks of the mountain only for the quarry, nor clothed the grass of the field only for the oven.

§ 8. Division of the pursuits of men into subservient and objective.

All science and all art may be divided into that which is subservient to life, and which is the object of it. As subservient to life, or practical, their results are, in the common sense of the word, useful. As the object of life or theoretic, they are, in the common sense, useless; and yet the step between practical and theoretic science is the step between the miner and the geologist, the apothecary and the chemist; and the step between practical and theoretic art is that between the bricklayer and the architect, between the plumber and the artist, and this is a step allowed on all hands to be from less to greater; so that the so-called useless part of each profession does by the authoritative and right instinct of mankind assume the superior and more noble place, even though books be sometimes written, and that by writers of no ordinary mind, which assume that a chemist is rewarded for the years of toil which have traced the greater part of the combinations of matter to their ultimate atoms, by discovering a cheap way of refining sugar, and date the eminence of the philosopher, whose life has been spent in the investigation of the laws of light, from the time of his inventing an improvement in spectacles.

But the common consent of men proves and accepts the proposition, that whatever part of any pursuit ministers to the bodily comforts, and admits of material uses, is ignoble, and whatsoever part is addressed to the mind only, is noble; and that geology does better in reclothing dry bones and revealing lost creations, than in tracing veins of lead and beds of iron; astronomy better in opening to us the houses of heaven than in teaching navigation; botany better in displaying structure than in expressing juices; surgery better in investigating organization than in setting limbs; only it is ordained that, for our encouragement, every step we make in the more exalted range of science adds something also to its practical applicabilities; that all the great phenomena of nature, the knowledge of which is desired by the angels only, by us partly, as it reveals to farther vision the being and the glory of Him in whom they rejoice and we live, dispense yet such kind influences and so much of material blessing as to be joyfully felt by all inferior creatures, and to be desired by them with such single desire as the imperfection of their nature may admit;* that the strong torrents which, in their own gladness fill the hills with hollow thunder and the vales with winding light, have yet their bounden charge of field to feed and barge to bear; that the fierce flames to which the Alp owes its upheaval and the volcano its terror, temper for us the metal vein and quickening spring; and that for our incitement, I say not our reward, for knowledge is its own reward, herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times.

§ 9. Their relative dignities.

It would appear, therefore, that those pursuits which are altogether theoretic, whose results are desirable or admirable in themselves and for their own sake, and in which no farther end to which their productions or discoveries are referred, can interrupt the contemplation of things as they are, by the endeavor to discover of what selfish uses they are capable (and of this order are painting and sculpture), ought to take rank above all pursuits which have any taint in them of subserviency to life, in so far as all such tendency is the sign of less eternal and less holy

§ 10. How reversed through erring notions of the contemplative and imaginative faculties.

---

* Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book I. chap. ii. § 2.

function.* And such rank these two sublime arts would indeed assume in the minds of nations, and become objects of corresponding efforts, but for two fatal and widespread errors respecting the great faculties of mind concerned in them.

The first of these, or the theoretic faculty, is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it is the considering and calling it æsthetic, degrading it to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom, so that the arts which appeal to it sink into a mere amusement, ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul's sleep.

The second great faculty is the imaginative, which the mind exercises in a certain mode of regarding or combining the ideas it has received from external nature, and the operations of which become in their turn objects of the theoretic faculty to other minds.

And the error respecting this faculty is, that its function is one of falsehood, that its operation is to exhibit things as they are *not*, and that in so doing it mends the works of God.

§ 11. Object of the present section.

Now, as these are the two faculties to which I shall have occasion constantly to refer during that examination of the ideas of beauty and relation on which we are now entering, because it is only as received and treated by these, that those ideas become exalted and profitable, it becomes necessary for me, in the outset, to explain their power and define their sphere, and to vindicate, in the system of our nature, their true place for the intellectual lens and moral retina by which and on which our informing thoughts are concentrated and represented.

---

* I do not assert that the accidental utility of a theoretic pursuit, as of botany for instance, in any way degrades it, though it cannot be considered as elevating it. But essential utility, a purpose to which the pursuit is in some measure referred, as in architecture, invariably degrades, because then the theoretic part of the art is comparatively lost sight of; and thus architecture takes a level below that of sculpture or painting, even when the powers of mind developed in it are of the same high order.

When we pronounce the name of Giotto, our venerant thoughts are at Assisi and Padua, before they climb the Campanile of Santa Maria del Fiore. And he who would raise the ghost of Michael Angelo, must haunt the Sistine and St. Lorenzo, not St. Peter's.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY AS CONCERNED WITH PLEASURES OF SENSE.

§ 1. Explanation of the term "theoretic."

I PROCEED therefore first, to examine the nature of what I have called the Theoretic faculty, and to justify my substitution of the term "theoretic" for æsthetic, which is the one commonly employed with reference to it.

Now the term "æsthesis" properly signifies mere sensual perception of the outward qualities and necessary effects of bodies, in which sense only, if we would arrive at any accurate conclusions on this difficult subject, it should always be used. But I wholly deny that the impressions of beauty are in any way sensual,—they are neither sensual nor intellectual, but moral, and for the faculty receiving them, whose difference from mere perception I shall immediately endeavor to explain, no term can be more accurate or convenient than that employed by the Greeks, "theoretic," which I pray permission, therefore, always to use, and to call the operation of the faculty itself, Theoria.

§ 2. Of the differences of rank in pleasures of sense.

Let us begin at the lowest point, and observe, first, what differences of dignity may exist between different kinds of æsthetic or sensual pleasure, properly so called.

Now it is evident that the being common to brutes, or peculiar to man, can alone be no rational test of inferiority, or dignity in pleasures. We must not assume that man is the nobler animal, and then deduce the nobleness of his delights; but we must prove the nobleness of the delights, and thence the nobleness of the animal. The dignity of affection is no way lessened because a large measure of it may be found in lower animals, neither is the vileness of gluttony and lust abated because they are common to men. It is clear, therefore, that there is a standard of dignity in the pleasures and passions themselves, by which we also class the creatures capable of, or suffering them.

The first great distinction, we observe, is that noted of Aristotle, that men are called temperate and intemperate with regard to some, and not so with respect to others, and that those, with respect to which they are so called, are, by common consent, held to be the vilest. But Aristotle, though exquisitely subtle in his notation of facts, does not frequently give us satisfactory account of, or reason for them. Content with stating the fact of these pleasures being held the lowest, he shows not why this estimation of them is just, and confuses the reader by observing casually respecting the higher pleasures, what is indeed true, but appears at first opposed to his own position, namely, that "men may be conceived, as also in these taking pleasure, either rightly, or more or less than is right." * Which being so, and evident capability of excess or defect existing in pleasures of this higher order, we ought to have been told how it happens that men are not called intemperate when they indulge in excess of this kind, and what is that difference in the nature of the pleasure which diminishes the criminality of its excess. This let us attempt to ascertain.

§ 3. Use of the terms Temperate and Intemperate.

Men are held intemparate (ἀκόλαστοι) only when their desires overcome or prevent the action of their reason, and they are indeed intemperate in the exact degree in which such prevention or interference takes place, and so are actually ακόλαστοι, in many instances, and with respect to many resolves, which lower not the world's estimation of their temperance. For so long as it can be supposed that the reason has acted imperfectly owing its own imperfection, or to the imperfection of the prem-

§ 4. Right use of the term "intemperate."

---

* ὡς δεῖ, καὶ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν καὶ ἔλλειψιν.

ises submitted to it, (as when men give an inordinate preference to their own pursuits, because they cannot, in the nature of things, have sufficiently experienced the goodness and benefit of others,) and so long as it may be presumed that men have referred to reason in what they do, and have not suffered its orders to be disobeyed through mere impulse and desire, (though those orders may be full of error owing to the reason's own feebleness,) so long men are not held intemperate. But when it is palpably evident that the reason cannot have erred but that its voice has been deadened or disobeyed, and that the reasonable creature has been dragged dead round the walls of his own citadel by mere passion and impulse,—then, and then only, men are of all held intemperate. And this is evidently the case with respect to inordinate indulgence in pleasures of touch and taste, for these, being destructive in their continuance not only of all other pleasures, but of the very sensibilities by which they themselves are received, and as this penalty is actually known and experienced by those indulging in them, so that the reason cannot but pronounce right respecting their perilousness, there is no palliation of the wrong choice: and the man, as utterly incapable of will,* is called intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος.

It would be well if the reader would for himself follow out this subject, which it would be irrelevant here to pursue farther, observing how a certain degree of intemperance is suspected and attributed to men with respect to higher impulses; as, for instance, in the case of anger, or any other passion criminally indulged, and yet is not so attributed, as in the case of sensual pleasures; because in anger the reason is supposed not to have had time to operate, and to be itself affected by the presence of the passion, which seizes the man involuntarily and before he is aware; whereas, in the case of the sensual pleasures, the act is deliberate, and determined on beforehand, in direct defiance of reason. Nevertheless, if no precaution be taken against immoderate anger, and the passions gain upon the man, so as to be evidently wilful and unrestrained, and admitted contrary to all reason, we begin to look upon him as, in the real sense of the word, intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος, and assign to him, in consequence, his place among the beasts, as definitely as if he had yielded to the pleasurable temptations of touch or taste.

---

* Comp. Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book i. chap. 8.

§ 5. Grounds of inferiority in the pleasures which are subjects of intemperance.

We see, then, that the primal ground of inferiority in these pleasures is that which *proves* their indulgence to be contrary to reason; namely, their destructiveness upon prolongation, and their incapability of co-existing continually with other delights or perfections of the system.

And this incapability of continuance directs us to the second cause of their inferiority; namely, that they are given to us as subservient to life, as instruments of our preservation —compelling us to seek the things necessary to our being, and that, therefore, when this their function is fully performed, they ought to have an end; and can be only artificially, and under high penalty, prolonged. But the pleasures of sight and hearing are given as gifts. They answer not any purposes of mere existence, for the distinction of all that is useful or dangerous to us might be made, and often is made, by the eye, without its receiving the slightest pleasure of sight. We might have learned to distinguish fruits and grain from flowers, without having any superior pleasure in the aspect of the latter. And the ear might have learned to distinguish the sounds that communicate ideas, or to recognize intimations of elemental danger without perceiving either music in the voice, or majesty in the thunder. And as these pleasures have no function to perform, so there is no limit to their continuance in the accomplishment of their end, for they are an end in themselves, and so may be perpetual with all of us—being in no way destructive, but rather increasing in exquisiteness by repetition.

§ 6. Evidence of higher rank in pleasures of sight and hearing.

Herein, then, we find very sufficient ground for the higher estimation of these delights, first, in their being eternal and inexhaustible, and secondly, in their being evidently no means or instrument of life, but an object of life. Now in whatever is an object of life, in whatever may be infinitely and for itself desired, we may be sure there is something of divine, for God will not make anything an object of life to his creatures which does not point to, or partake of, Himself. And so, though we were to regard the pleasures of sight merely as the highest of sensual pleasures, and though they were of rare occurrence, and, when occurring, isolated and imperfect, there would still be a supernatural character about them, owing to their permanence and self-sufficiency, where no other sensual pleasures are permanent or self-sufficient. But when, instead of being scattered, interrupted, or chance-distributed, they are gathered together, and so arranged to enhance each other as by chance they could not be, there is caused by them not only a feeling of strong affection towards the object in which they exist, but a perception of purpose and adaptation of it to our desires ; a perception, therefore, of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us.

Out of which perception arise joy, admiration, and gratitude.

Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness I call æsthesis ; but the exulting, reverent, and grateful perception of it I call theoria. For this, and this only, is the full comprehension and contemplation of the beautiful as a gift of God, a gift not necessary to our being, but added to, and elevating it, and twofold, first of the desire, and secondly of the thing desired.

§ 7. How the lower pleasures may be elevated in rank.

And that this joyfulness and reverence are a necessary part of theoretic pleasure is very evident when we consider that, by the presence of these feelings, even the lower and more sensual pleasures may be rendered theoretic. Thus Aristotle has subtly noted, that " we call not men intemperate so much with respect to the scents of roses or herb-perfumes as of ointments and of condiments," (though the reason that he gives for this be futile enough.) For the fact is, that of scents artificially prepared the extreme desire is intemperance, but of natural and God-given scents, which take their part in the harmony and pleasantness of creation, there can hardly be intemperance; not that there is any absolute difference between the two kinds, but that these are likely to be received with gratitude and joyfulness rather than those, so that we despise the seeking of essences and unguents, but not the sowing of violets along our garden banks. But all things may be elevated by affection, as the spikenard of Mary, and in the Song of Solomon, the myrrh upon the handles of the lock, and that of Isaac concerning his son. And the general law for all these pleasures is, that when sought in the abstract and ardently, they are foul things, but when received with thankfulness and with reference to God's glory, they become theoretic; and so I can find something divine in the sweetness of wild fruits, as well as in the pleasantness of the pure air, and the tenderness of its natural perfumes that come and go as they list.

§ 8. Ideas of beauty how essentially moral.

It will be understood why I formerly said in the chapter respecting ideas of beauty, that those ideas were the subject of moral and not of intellectual, nor altogether of sensual perception; and why I spoke of the pleasures connected with them as derived from "those material sources which are agreeable to our moral nature in its purity and perfection." For, as it is necessary to the existence of an idea of beauty, that the sensual pleasure which may be its basis, should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness in a superior Intelligence, finally with thankfulness and veneration towards that Intelligence itself, and as no idea can be at all considered as in any way an idea of beauty, until it be made up of these emotions, any more than we can be said to have an idea of a letter of which we perceive the perfume and the fair writing, without understanding the contents of it, or intent of it; and as these emotions are in no way resultant from, nor obtainable by, any operation of the intellect, it is evident that the sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other, but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart, both for its truth and for its intensity, insomuch that even the right after action of the intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended, is dependent on the acuteness of the heart feeling about them; and thus the Apostolic words come true, in this minor respect as in all others, that men are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, having the understanding darkened because of the hardness of their hearts, and so being past feeling, give themselves up to lasciviousness; for we do indeed see constantly that men having naturally acute perceptions of the beautiful, yet not receiving it with a pure heart, nor into their hearts at all, never comprehend it, nor receive good from it, but make it a mere minister to their desires, and accompaniment and seasoning of lower sensual pleasures, until all their emotions take the same earthly stamp, and the sense of beauty sinks into the servant of lust.

§ 9. How degraded by heartless reception.

Nor is what the world commonly understands by the cultivation of taste, anything more or better than this, at least in times of corrupt and over-pampered civilization, when men build palaces and plant groves and gather luxuries, that they and their devices may hang in the corners of the world like fine-spun cobwebs, with greedy, puffed-up, spider-like lusts in the middle. And this, which in Christian times is the abuse and corruption of the sense of beauty, was in that Pagan life of which St. Paul speaks, little less than the essence of it, and the best they had; for I know not that of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found among Heathen writers, there are any of which the balance and leading thought cleaves not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned, her teaching through both, they understood never. The pleasant influences of soft winds and ringing streamlets, and shady coverts; of the violet couch, and plane-tree shade,* they received, perhaps, in a more noble way than we, but they found not anything except fear, upon the bare mountain, or in the ghostly glen. The Hybla heather they loved more for its sweet hives than its

§ 10. How exalted by affection.

---

* Plato, Phædrus, § 9.

purple hues. But the Christian theoria seeks not, though it accepts, and touches with its own purity, what the Epicurean sought, but finds its food and the objects of its love everywhere, in what is harsh and fearful, as well as what is kind, nay, even in all that seems coarse and commonplace ; seizing that which is good, and delighting more sometimes at finding its table spread in strange places, and in the presence of its enemies, and its honey coming out of the rock, than if all were harmonized into a less wondrous pleasure ; hating only what is self-sighted and insolent of men's work, despising all that is not of God, unless reminding it of God, yet able to find evidence of him still, where all seems forgetful of him, and to turn that into a witness of his working which was meant to obscure it, and so with clear and unoffended sight beholding him forever, according to the written promise,—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

CHAPTER III.

OF ACCURACY AND INACCURACY IN IMPRESSIONS OF SENSE.

§ 1. By what test is the health of the perceptive faculty to be determined?

HITHERTO we have observed only the distinctions of dignity among pleasures of sense, considered merely as such, and the way in which any of them may become theoretic in being received with right feeling.

But as we go farther, and examine the distinctive nature of ideas of beauty, we shall, I believe, perceive something in them besides æsthetic pleasure, which attests a more important function belonging to them than attaches to other sensual ideas, and exhibits a more exalted character in the faculty by which they are received. And this was what I alluded to, when I said in the chapter already referred to (§ 1), that "we may indeed perceive, as far as we are acquainted with the nature of God, that we have been so constructed as in a healthy state of mind to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature."

This point it is necessary now farther to develop.

Our first inquiry must evidently be, how we are authorized to affirm of any man's mind, respecting impressions of sight, that it is in a healthy state or otherwise. What canon or test is there by which we may determine of these impressions that they are or are not *rightly* esteemed beautiful? To what authority, when men are at variance with each other on this subject, shall it be deputed to judge which is right? or is there any such authority or canon at all?

For it does not at first appear easy to prove that men ought to like one thing rather than another, and although this is granted generally by men's speaking of bad or good taste, it is frequently denied when we pass to particulars, by the assertion of each individual that he has a right to his opinion—a right which is sometimes claimed even in moral matters, though then palpably without foundation, but which does not appear altogether irrational in matters æsthetic, wherein little operation of voluntary choice is supposed possible. It would appear strange, for instance, to assert, respecting a particular person who preferred the scent of violets to roses, that he had no right to do so. And yet, while I have said that the sensation of beauty is intuitive and necessary, as men derive pleasure from the scent of a rose, I have assumed that there are some sources from which it is rightly derived, and others from which it is wrongly derived, in other words that men have no right to think some things beautiful, and no right to remain apathetic with regard to others.

Hence then arise two questions, according to the sense in which the word right is taken; the first, in what way an impression of sense may be deceptive, and therefore a conclusion respecting it untrue; and the second, in what way an impression of sense, or the preference of one, may be a subject of will, and therefore of moral duty or delinquency.

§ 2. And in what sense may the terms Right and Wrong be attached to its conclusions?

To the first of these questions, I answer that we cannot speak of the immediate impression of sense as false, nor of its preference to others as mistaken, for no one can be deceived respecting the actual sensation he perceives or prefers.

But falsity may attach to his assertion or supposition, either that what he himself perceives is from the same object perceived by others, or is always to be by himself perceived, or is always to be by himself preferred; and when we speak of a man as wrong in his impressions of sense, we either mean that he feels differently from all, or a majority, respecting a certain object, or that he prefers at present those of his impressions, which ultimately he will not prefer.

To the second I answer, that over immediate impressions and immediate preferences we have no power, but over ultimate impressions, and especially ultimate preferences we have; and that, though we can neither at once choose whether we shall see an object, red, green, or blue, nor determine to like the red better than the blue, or the blue better than the red, yet we can, if we choose, make ourselves ultimately susceptible of such impressions in other degrees, and capable of pleasures in them in different measure; and because, wherever power of any kind is given, there is responsibility attached, it is the duty of men to prefer certain impressions of sense to others, because they have the power of doing so, this being precisely analogous to the law of the moral world, whereby men are supposed not only capable of governing their likes and dislikes, but the whole culpability or propriety of actions is dependent upon this capability, so that men are guilty or otherwise, not for what they do, but for what they desire, the command being not, thou shalt obey, but thou shalt love, the Lord thy God, which, if men were not capable of governing and directing their affections, would be the command of an impossibility.

§ 3. What power we have over impressions of sense.

I assert, therefore, that even with respect to impressions of sense, we have a power of preference, and a corresponding duty, and I shall show first the nature of the power, and afterwards the nature of the duty.

Let us take an instance from one of the lowest of the senses, and observe the kind of power we have over the impressions of lingual taste. On the first offering of two different things to the palate, it is not in our power to prevent or command the instinctive preference. One will be unavoidably and helplessly preferred to the other. But if the same two things be submitted to judgment frequently and attentively, it will be often found that their relations change. The palate, which at first perceived only the coarse and violent qualities of either, will, as it becomes more experienced, acquire greater subtilty and delicacy of discrimination, perceiving in both agreeable or disagreeable qualities at first unnoticed, which on continued experience will probably become more influential than the first impressions ; and whatever this final verdict may be, it is felt by the person who gives it, and received by others as a more correct one than the first.

So, then, the power we have over the preference of impressions of taste is not actual nor immediate, but only a power of testing and comparing them frequently and carefully, until that which is the more permanent, the more consistently agreeable, be determined.

§ 4. Depends on acuteness of attention.

But when the instrument of taste is thus in some degree perfected and rendered subtile, by its being practised upon a single object, its conclusions will be more rapid with respect to others, and it will be able to distinguish more quickly in other things, and even to prefer at once, those qualities which are calculated finally to give it most pleasure, though more capable with respect to those on which it is more frequently exercised ; whence people are called judges with respect to this or that particular object of taste.

§ 5. Ultimate conclusions universal.

Now that verdicts of this kind are received as authoritative by others, proves another and more important fact, namely, that not only changes of opinion take place in consequence of experience, but that those changes are from variation of opinion to unity of opinion ; and that whatever may be the differences of estimate among unpractised or uncultivated tastes, there will be unity of taste among the experienced. And that therefore the operation of repeated trial and experience is to arrive at principles of preference in some sort common to all, and which are a part of our nature.

I have selected the sense of taste for an instance, because it is the least favorable to the position I hold, since there is more latitude allowed, and more actual variety of verdict in the case of this sense than of any other; and yet, however susceptible of variety even the ultimate approximations of its preferences may be, the authority of judges is distinctly allowed, and we hear every day the admission, by those of unpractised palate, that they are, or may be wrong in their opinions respecting the real pleasurableness of things either to themselves, or to others.

§ 6. What duty is attached to this power over impressions of sense.

The sense, however, in which they thus use the word "wrong" is merely that of falseness or inaccuracy in conclusion, not of moral delinquency. But there is, as I have stated, a duty, more or less imperative, attached to every power we possess, and therefore to this power over the lower senses as well as to all others.

And this duty is evidently to bring every sense into that state of cultivation, in which it shall both form the truest conclusions respecting all that is submitted to it, and procure us the greatest amount of pleasure consistent with its due relation to other senses and functions. Which three constituents of perfection in sense, true judgment, maximum sensibility, and right relation to others, are invariably coexistent and involved one by the other, for the true judgment is the result of the high sensibility, and the high sensibility of the right relation. Thus, for instance, with respect to pleasures of taste, it is our duty not to devote such inordinate attention to the discrimination of them as must be inconsistent with our pursuit, and destructive of our capacity of higher and preferable pleasures, but to cultivate the sense of them in that way which is consistent with all other good, by temperance, namely, and by such attention as the mind at certain resting moments may fitly pay even to so ignoble a source of pleasure as this, by which discipline we shall bring the faculty of taste itself to its real maximum of sensibility; for it may not be doubted but that health, hunger, and such general refinement of bodily habits as shall make the body a perfect and fine instrument in all respects, are better promoters of actual sensual enjoyment of taste, than the sickened, sluggish, hard-stimulated fastidiousness of Epicurism.

So also it will certainly be found with all the senses, that they individually receive the greatest and purest pleasure when they are in right condition and degree of subordination to all the rest; and that by the over cultivation of any one, (for morbid sources of pleasure and correspondent temptations to irrational indulgence, confessedly are attached to all,) we shall add more to their power as instruments of punishment than of pleasure.

§ 7. How rewarded.

We see then, in this example of the lowest sense, that the power we have over sensations and preferences depends mainly on the exercise of attention through certain prolonged periods, and that by this exercise, we arrive at ultimate, constant, and common sources of agreeableness, casting off those which are external, accidental, and individual.

That then which is required in order to the attainment of accurate conclusions respecting the essence of the beautiful, is nothing more than earnest, loving, and unselfish attention to our impressions of it, by which those which are shallow, false, or peculiar to times and temperaments, may be distinguished from those that are eternal. And this dwelling upon, and fond contemplation of them, (the anschauung of the Germans,) is perhaps as much as was meant by the Greek theoria; and it is indeed a very noble exercise of the souls of men, and one by which they are peculiarly distinguished from the anima of lower creatures, which cannot, I think, be proved to have any capacity of contemplation at all, but only a restless vividness of perception and conception, the "fancy" of Hooker (Eccl. Pol. Book i. Chap. vi. 2). And yet this dwelling upon them comes not up to that which I wish to express by the word theoria, unless it be accompanied by full perception of their being a gift from and manifestation of God, and by all those other nobler emotions before described, since not until so felt is their essential nature comprehended.

§ 8. Especially with respect to ideas of beauty.

But two very important points are to be observed respecting the direction and discipline of the attention in the early stages of judgment. The first, that, for many beneficent purposes, the nature of man has been made reconcilable by custom to many things naturally painful to it, and even improper for it, and that therefore, though by continued experience, united with thought, we may discover that which is best of several, yet if we submit ourselves to authority or fashion, and close our eyes, we may be by custom made to tolerate, and even to love and long for, that which is naturally painful and pernicious to us, whence arise incalculable embarrassments on the subject of art.

§ 9. Errors induced by the power of habit.

The second, that, in order to the discovery of that which is best of two things, it is necessary that both should be equally submitted to the attention; and therefore that we should have so much faith in authority as shall make us repeatedly observe and attend to that which is said to be right, even though at present we may not feel it so. And in the right mingling of this faith with the openness of heart, which proves all things, lies the great difficulty of the cultivation of the taste, as far as the spirit of the scholar is concerned, though even when he has this spirit, he may be long retarded by having evil examples submitted to him by ignorant masters.

§ 10. The necessity of submission in early stages of judgment.

The temper, therefore, by which right taste is formed, is, first, patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it, it does not trample upon it lest it should be pearls, even though it look like husks, it is a good ground, soft, penetrable, retentive, it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts, to choke the weak seed, it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it, it is an honest and good heart, that shows no too ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and to try all things, and yet so trustful of itself, that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And that pleasure which it has in things that it finds true and good, is so great that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion, nor diseases of vanity, it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies, its visions and its delights are too penetrating, too living, for any whitewashed object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply. It clasps all that it loves so hard, that it crushes it if it be hollow.

§ 11. The large scope of matured judgment.

Now, the conclusions of this disposition are sure to be eventually right, more and more right according to the general maturity of all the powers, but it is sure to come right at last, because its operation is in analogy to, and in harmony with, the whole spirit of the Christian moral system, and that which it will ultimately love and rest in, are great sources of happiness common to all the human race, and based on the relations they hold to their Creator.

These common and general sources of pleasure are, I believe, a certain seal, or impress of divine work and character, upon whatever God has wrought in all the world ; only, it being necessary for the perception of them, that their contraries should also be set before us, these divine qualities, though inseparable from all divine works, are yet suffered to exist in such varieties of degree, that their most limited manifestation shall, in opposition to their most abundant, act as a foil or contrary, just as we conceive of cold as contrary to heat, though the most extreme cold we can produce or conceive is not inconsistent with an unknown amount of heat in the body.

§ 12. How distinguishable from false taste.

Our purity of taste, therefore, is best tested by its universality, for if we can only admire this thing or that, we may be sure that our cause for liking is of a finite and false nature. But if we can perceive beauty in everything of God's doing, we may argue that we have reached the true perception of its universal laws. Hence, false taste may be known by its fastidiousness, by its demands of pomp, splendor, and unusual combination, by its enjoyment only of particular styles and modes of things, and by its pride also, for it is forever meddling, mending, accumulating, and self-exulting, its eye is always upon itself, and it tests all things around it by the way they fit it. But true taste is forever growing, learning, reading, worshipping, laying its hand upon its mouth because it is astonished, casting its shoes from off its feet because it finds all ground holy, lamenting over itself and testing itself by the way that it fits things. And it finds whereof to feed, and whereby to grow, in all things, and therefore the complaint so often made by young artists that they have not within their reach materials, or subjects enough for their fancy, is utterly groundless, and the sign only of their own blindness and inefficiency; for there is that to be seen in every street and lane of every city, that to be felt and found in every human heart and countenance, that to be loved in every road-side weed and moss-grown wall, which in the hands of faithful men, may convey emotions of glory and sublimity continual and exalted.

§ 13. The danger of a spirit of choice.

Let therefore the young artist beware of the spirit of choice,* it is an insolent spirit at the best and commonly a base and blind one too, checking all progress and blasting all power, encouraging weaknesses, pampering partialities, and teaching us to look to accidents of nature for the help and the joy which should come from our own hearts. He draws nothing well who thirsts not to draw *every*thing; when a good painter shrinks, it is because he is humbled, not fastidious, when he stops, it is because he is surfeited, and not because he thinks nature has given him unkindly food, or that he fears famine.† I have seen a man of true taste pause for a quarter of an hour to look at the channellings that recent rain had traced in a heap of cinders.

§ 14. And criminality.

And here is evident another reason of that duty which we owe respecting impressions of sight, namely, to discipline ourselves to the enjoyment of those which are eternal in their nature, not only because these are the most acute, but because they are the most easily, constantly, and unselfishly attainable. For had it been ordained by the Almighty that the highest pleasures of sight should be those of most difficult attainment, and that to arrive at them it should be necessary to accumulate gilded palaces tower over tower, and pile artificial mountains around insinuated lakes, there would have been a direct contradiction between the unselfish duties and inherent desires of every individual. But no such contradiction exists in the system of Divine Providence, which, leaving it open to us, if we will, as creatures in probation, to abuse this sense like every other, and pamper it with selfish and thoughtless vanities as we pamper the palate with deadly meats, until the appetite of tasteful cruelty is lost in its sickened satiety, incapable of pleasure unless, Caligula like, it concentrate the labor of a million of lives into the sensation of an hour, leaves it also open to us, by humble and loving ways, to make ourselves susceptible of deep delight from the meanest objects of creation, and of a delight which shall not separate us from our fellows, nor require the sacrifice of any duty or occupation, but which shall bind us closer to men and to God, and be with us always, harmonized with every action, consistent with every claim, unchanging and eternal.

---

* "Nothing comes amiss,—
A good digestion turneth all to health."—G. HERBERT.

† Yet note the difference between the choice that comes of pride, and the choice that comes of love, and compare Chap. xv. § 6.

§ 15. How certain conclusions respecting beauty are by reason demonstrable.

Seeing then that these qualities of material objects which are calculated to give us this universal pleasure, are demonstrably constant in their address to human nature, they must belong in some measure to whatever has been esteemed beautiful throughout successive ages of the world (and they are also by their definition common to all the works of God). Therefore it is evident that it must be possible to reason them out, as well as to feel them out ; possible to divest every object of that which makes it accidentally or temporarily pleasant, and to strip it bare of distinctive qualities, until we arrive at those which it has in common with all other beautiful things, which we may then safely affirm to be the cause of its ultimate and true delightfulness.

Now this process of reasoning will be that which I shall endeavor to employ in the succeeding investigations, a process perfectly safe, so long as we are quite sure that we are reasoning concerning objects which produce in us one and the same sensation, but not safe if the sensation produced be of a different nature, though it may be equally agreeable; for what produces a different sensation must be a different cause. And the difficulty of reasoning respecting beauty arises chiefly from the ambiguity of the word, which stands in different people's minds for totally different sensations, for which there can be no common cause.

§ 16. With what liabilities to error.

When, for instance, Mr. Alison endeavors to support his position that "no man is sensible to beauty in those objects with regard to which he has not previous ideas," by the remark that "the beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant," we see at once that it is hopeless to argue with a man who, under his general term beauty, may, for anything we know, be sometimes speaking of mathematical demonstrability and sometimes of historical interest; while even if we could succeed in limiting the term to the sense of external attractiveness, there would be still room for many phases of error; for though the beauty of a snowy mountain and of a human cheek or forehead, so far as both are considered as mere matter, is the same, and traceable to certain qualities of color and line, common to both, and by reason extricable, yet the flush of the cheek and moulding of the brow, as they express modesty, affection, or intellect, possess sources of agreeableness which are not common to the snowy mountain, and the interference of whose influence we must be cautious to prevent in our examination of those which are material and universal.*

§ 17. The term "beauty" how limitable in the outset. Divided into typical and vital.

The first thing, then, that we have to do, is accurately to discriminate and define those appearances from which we are about to reason as belonging to beauty, properly so called, and to clear the ground of all the confused ideas and erroneous theories with which the misapprehension or metaphorical use of the term has encumbered it.

---

* Compare Spenser. (Hymn to Beauty.)

"But ah, believe me, there is more than so,
That works such wonders in the minds of men."

By the term beauty, then, properly are signified two things. First, that external quality of bodies already so often spoken of, and which, whether it occur in a stone, flower, beast, or in man, is absolutely identical, which, as I have already asserted, may be shown to be in some sort typical of the Divine attributes, and which, therefore, I shall, for distinction's sake, call typical beauty; and, secondarily, the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things, more especially of the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man. And this kind of beauty I shall call vital beauty.

Any application of the word beautiful to other appearances or qualities than these, is either false or metaphorical, as, for instance, to the splendor of a discovery, the fitness of a proportion, the coherence of a chain of reasoning, or the power of bestowing pleasure which objects receive from association, a power confessedly great, and interfering, as we shall presently find, in a most embarrassing way with the attractiveness of inherent beauty.

But in order that the mind of the reader may not be biassed at the outset by that which he may happen to have received of current theories respecting beauty, founded on the above metaphorical uses of the word, (theories which are less to be reprobated as accounting falsely for the sensations of which they treat, than as confusing two or more pleasurable sensations together,) I shall briefly glance at the four erroneous positions most frequently held upon this subject, before proceeding to examine those typical and vital properties of things, to which I conceive that all our original conceptions of beauty may be traced.

CHAPTER IV.

OF FALSE OPINIONS HELD CONCERNING BEAUTY.

§ 1. Of the false opinion that truth is beauty, and vice versa.

I PURPOSE at present to speak only of four of the more current opinions respecting beauty, for of the errors connected with the pleasurableness of proportion, and of the expression of right feelings in the countenance, I shall have opportunity to treat in the succeeding chapters; (compare Ch. VI. Ch. XVI.)

Those erring or inconsistent positions which I would at once dismiss are, the first, that the beautiful is the true, the second, that the beautiful is the useful, the third, that it is dependent on custom, and the fourth, that it is dependent on the association of ideas.

To assert that the beautiful is the true, appears, at first, like asserting that propositions are matter, and matter propositions. But giving the best and most rational interpretation we can, and supposing the holders of this strange position to mean only that things are beautiful which appear what they indeed are, and ugly which appear what they are not, we find them instantly contradicted by each and every conclusion of experience. A stone looks as truly a stone as a rose looks a rose, and yet is not so beautiful; a cloud may look more like a castle than a cloud, and be the more beautiful on that account. The mirage of the desert is fairer than its sands; the false image of the under heaven fairer than the sea. I am at a loss to know how any so untenable a position could ever have been advanced; but it may, perhaps, have arisen from some confusion of the beauty of art with the beauty of nature, and from an illogical expansion of the very certain truth, that nothing is beautiful in art, which, professing to be an imitation, or a statement, is not as such in some sort true.

That the beautiful is the useful, is an assertion evidently based on that limited and false sense of the latter term which I have already deprecated. As it is the most degrading and dangerous supposition which can be advanced on the subject, so, fortunately, it is the most palpably absurd. It is to confound admiration with hunger, love with lust, and life with sensation; it is to assert that the human creature has no ideas and no feelings, except those ultimately referable to its brutal appetites. It has not a single fact nor appearance of fact to support it, and needs no combating, at least until its advocates have obtained the consent of the majority of mankind, that the most beautiful productions of nature are seeds and roots; and of art, spades and millstones.

§ 2. Of the false opinion that beauty is usefulness. Compare Chap. xii. § 5.

Somewhat more rational grounds appear for the assertion that the sense of the beautiful arises from familiarity with the object, though even this could not long be maintained by a thinking person. For all that can be alleged in defence of such a supposition is, that familiarity deprives some objects which at first appeared ugly, of much of their repulsiveness, whence it is as rational to conclude that familiarity is the cause of beauty, as it would be to argue that because it is possible to acquire a taste for olives, therefore custom is the cause of lusciousness in grapes. Nevertheless, there are some phenomena resulting from the tendency of our nature to be influenced by habit of which it may be well to observe the limits.

§ 3. Of the false opinion that beauty results from custom. Compare Chap. vi. § 1.

Custom has a twofold operation: the one to deaden the frequency and force of repeated impressions, the other to endear the familiar object to the affections. Commonly, where the mind is vigorous, and the power of sensation very perfect, it has rather the last operation than the first; with meaner minds, the first takes place in the higher degree, so that they are commonly characterized by a desire of excitement, and the want of the loving, fixed, theoretic power. But both take place in some degree with all men, so that as life advances, impressions of all kinds become less rapturous owing

§ 4. The twofold operation of custom. It deadens sensation, but confirms affection.

to their repetition. It is however beneficently ordained that repulsiveness shall be diminished by custom in a far greater degree than the sensation of beauty, so that the anatomist in a little time loses all sense of horror in the torn flesh, and carous bone, while the sculptor ceases not to feel to the close of his life, the deliciousness of every line of the outward frame. So then as in that with which we are made familiar, the repulsiveness is constantly diminishing, and such claims as it may be able to put forth on the affections are daily becoming stronger, while in what is submitted to us of new or strange, that which may be repulsive is felt in its full force, while no hold is as yet laid on the affections, there is a very strong preference induced in most minds for that to which they are not accustomed over that they know not, and this is strongest in those which are least open to sensations of positive beauty. But however far this operation may be carried, its utmost effect is but the deadening and approximating the sensations of beauty and ugliness. It never mixes nor crosses, nor in any way alters them ; it has not the slightest connection with nor power over their nature. By tasting two wines alternately, we may deaden our perception of their flavor ; nay, we may even do more than can ever be done in the case of sight, we may confound the two flavors together. But it will hardly be argued therefore that custom is the cause of either flavor. And so, though by habit we may deaden the effect of ugliness or beauty, it is not for that reason to be affirmed that habit is the cause of either sensation. We may keep a skull beside us as long as we please, we may overcome its repulsiveness, we may render ourselves capable of perceiving many qualities of beauty about its lines, we may contemplate it for years together if we will, it and nothing else, but we shall not get ourselves to think as well of it as of a child's fair face.

§ 5. But never either creates or destroys the essence of beauty.

It would be easy to pursue the subject farther, but I believe that every thoughtful reader will be perfectly well able to supply farther illustrations, and sweep away the sandy foundations of the opposite theory,

§ 6. Instances.

unassisted. Let it, however, be observed, that in spite of all custom, an Englishman instantly acknowledges, and at first sight, the superiority of the turban to the hat, or of the plaid to the coat, that whatever the dictates of immediate fashion may compel, the superior gracefulness of the Greek or middle age costumes is invariably felt, and that, respecting what has been asserted of negro nations looking with disgust on the white face, no importance whatever is to be attached to the opinions of races who have never received any ideas of beauty whatsoever, (these ideas being only received by minds under some certain degree of cultivation,) and whose disgust arises naturally from what they may suppose to be a sign of weakness or ill health. It would be futile to proceed into farther detail. I pass to the last and most weighty theory, that the agreeableness in objects which we call beauty is the result of the association with them of agreeable or interesting ideas.

§ 7. Of the false opinion that beauty depends on the association of ideas.

Frequent has been the support, and wide the acceptance of this supposition, and yet I suppose that no two consecutive sentences were ever written in defence of it, without involving either a contradiction or a confusion of terms. Thus Alison, "There are scenes undoubtedly more beautiful than Runnymede, yet to those who recollect the great event that passed there, there is no scene perhaps which so strongly seizes on the imagination." Here we are wonder-struck at the audacious obtuseness which would prove the power of imagination by its overcoming that very other power (of inherent beauty) whose existence the arguer denies. For the only logical conclusion which can possibly be drawn from the above sentence is, that imagination is *not* the source of beauty, for although no scene seizes so strongly on the imagination, yet there are scenes "more beautiful than Runnymede." And though instances of self-contradiction as laconic and complete as this are to be found in few writers except Alison, yet if the arguments on the subject be fairly sifted from the mass of confused language with which they are always encumbered and placed in logical form, they will be found invariably to involve one of these two syllogisms, either, association gives pleasure, and beauty gives pleasure, therefore association is beauty. Or, the power of association is stronger than the power of beauty, therefore the power of association *is* the power of beauty.

§ 8. Association. Is, 1st, rational. It is of no efficiency as a cause of beauty.

Nevertheless it is necessary for us to observe the real value and authority of association in the moral system, and how ideas of actual beauty may be affected by it, otherwise we shall be liable to embarrassment throughout the whole of the succeeding argument.

Association is of two kinds. Rational and accidental. By rational association I understand the interest which any object may bear historically as having been in some way connected with the affairs or affections of men ; an interest shared in the minds of all who are aware of such connection : which to call beauty is mere and gross confusion of terms, it is no theory to be confuted, but a misuse of language to be set aside, a misuse involving the positions that in uninhabited countries the vegetation has no grace, the rock no dignity, the cloud no color, and that the snowy summits of the Alps receive no loveliness from the sunset light, because they have not been polluted by the wrath, ravage, and misery of men.

§ 9. Association accidental. The extent of its influence.

By accidental association, I understand the accidental connection of ideas and memories with material things, owing to which those material things are regarded as agreeable or otherwise, according to the nature of the feelings or recollections they summon ; the association being commonly involuntary and oftentimes so vague as that no distinct image is suggested by the object, but we feel a painfulness in it or pleasure from it, without knowing wherefore. Of this operation of the mind (which is that of which I spoke as causing inextricable embarrassments on the subject of beauty) the experience is constant, so that its more energetic manifestations require no illustration. But I do not think that the minor degrees and shades of this great influence have been sufficiently appreciated. Not only all vivid emotions and all circumstances of exciting interest leave their light and shadow on the senseless things and instruments among which or through whose agency they have been felt or learned, but I believe that the eye cannot rest on a material form, in a moment of depression or exultation, without communicating to that form a spirit and a life, a life which will make it afterwards in some degree loved or feared, a charm or a painfulness for which we shall be unable to account even to ourselves, which will not indeed be perceptible, except by its delicate influence on our judgment in cases of complicated beauty. Let the eye but rest on a rough piece of branch of curious form during a conversation with a friend, rest, however, unconsciously, and though the conversation be forgotten, though every circumstance connected with it be as utterly lost to the memory as though it had not been, yet the eye will, through the whole life after, take a certain pleasure in such boughs which it had not before, a pleasure so slight, a trace of feeling so delicate as to leave us utterly unconscious of its peculiar power, but undestroyable by any reasoning, a part, thenceforward, of our constitution, destroyable only by the same arbitrary process of association by which it was created. Reason has no effect upon it whatsoever. And there is probably no one opinion which is formed by any of us, in matters of taste, which is not in some degree influenced by unconscious association of this kind. In many who have no definite rules of judgment, preference is decided by little else, and thus, unfortunately, its operations are mistaken for, or rather substituted for, those of inherent beauty, and its real position and value in the moral system is in a great measure overlooked.

§ 10. The dignity of its function.

For I believe that mere pleasure and pain have less associative power than duty performed or omitted, and that the great use of the associative faculty is not to add beauty to material things, but to add force to the conscience. But for this external and all-powerful witness, the voice of the inward guide might be lost in each particular instance, almost as soon as disobeyed; the echo of it in after time, whereby, though perhaps feeble as warning, it becomes powerful as punishment, might be silenced, and the strength of the protection pass away in the lightness of the lash. Therefore it has received the power of enlisting external and unmeaning things in its aid, and transmitting to all that is indifferent, its own authority to reprove or reward, so that, as we travel the way of life, we have the choice, according to our working, of turning all the voices of nature into one song of rejoicing, and all her lifeless creatures into a glad company, whereof the meanest shall be beautiful in our eyes, by its kind message, or of withering and quenching her sympathy into a fearful, withdrawn, silence of condemnation, or into a crying out of her stones, and a shaking of her dust against us. Nor is it any marvel that the theoretic faculty should be overpowered by this momentous operation, and the indifferent appeals and inherent glories of external things in the end overlooked, when the perfection of God's works is felt only as the sweetness of his promises, and their admirableness only as the threatenings of his power.

§ 11. How it is connected with impressions of beauty.

But it is evident that the full exercise of this noble function of the associative faculty is inconsistent with absolute and incontrovertible conclusions on subjects of theoretic preference. For it is quite impossible for any individual to distinguish in himself the unconscious underworking of indefinite association, peculiar to him individually, from those great laws of choice under which he is comprehended with all his race. And it is well for us that it is so, the harmony of God's good work is not in us interrupted by this mingling of universal and peculiar principles; for by these such difference is secured in the feelings as shall make fellowship itself more delightful, by its inter-communicate character, and such variety of feeling also in each of us separately as shall make us capable of enjoying scenes of different kinds and orders, instead of morbidly seeking for some perfect epitome of the beautiful in one; and also that deadening by custom of theoretic impressions to which I have above alluded, is counterbalanced by the pleasantness of acquired association; and the loss of the intense feeling of the youth, which "had no need of a remoter charm, by thought supplied, or any interest, unborrowed from the eye," is replaced by the gladness of conscience, and the vigor of the reflecting and imaginative faculties, as they take their wide and aged grasp of the great relations between the earth and its dead people.

§ 12. And what caution it renders necessary in the examination of them.

In proportion therefore to the value, constancy, and efficiency of this influence, we must be modest and cautious in the pronouncing of positive opinions on the subject of beauty. For every one of us has peculiar sources of enjoyment necessarily opened to him in certain scenes and things, sources which are sealed to others, and we must be wary on the one hand, of confounding these in ourselves with ultimate conclusions of taste, and so forcing them upon all as authoritative, and on the other of supposing that the enjoyments of others which we cannot share are shallow or unwarrantable, because incommunicable. I fear, for instance, that in the former portion of this work I may have attributed too much community and authority to certain affections of my own for scenery inducing emotions of wild, impetuous, and enthusiastic characters, and too little to those which I perceive in others for things peaceful, humble, meditative, and solemn. So also between youth and age there will be found differences of seeking, which are not wrong, nor of false choice in either, but of different temperament, the youth sympathizing more with the gladness, fulness, and magnificence of things, and the gray hairs with their completion, sufficiency and repose. And so, neither condemning the delights of others, nor altogether distrustful of our own, we must advance, as we live on, from what is brilliant to what is pure, and from what is promised to what is fulfilled, and from what is our strength to what is our crown, only observing in all things how that which is indeed wrong, and to be cut up from the root, is dislike, and not affection. For by the very nature of these beautiful qualities, which I have defined to be the signature of God upon his works, it is evident that in whatever we altogether dislike, we see not all; that the keenness of our vision is to be tested by the expansiveness of our love, and that as far as the influence of association has voice in the question, though it is indeed possible that the inevitable painfulness of an object, for which we can render no sufficient reason, may be owing to its recalling of a sorrow, it is more probably dependent on its accusation of a crime.

CHAPTER V.

OF TYPICAL BEAUTY:—FIRST, OF INFINITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY.

§ 1. Impossibility of adequately treating the subject.

The subject being now in some measure cleared of embarrassment, let us briefly distinguish those qualities or types on whose combination is dependent the power of mere material loveliness. I pretend neither to enumerate nor perceive them all, for it may be generally observed that whatever good there may be, desirable by man, more especially good belonging to his moral nature, there will be a corresponding agreeableness in whatever external object reminds him of such good, whether it remind him by arbitrary association or by typical resemblance, and that the infinite ways, whether by reason or experience discoverable, by which matter in some sort may remind us of moral perfections, are hardly within any reasonable limits to be explained, if even by any single mind they might all be traced. Yet certain palpable and powerful modes there are, by observing which, we may come at such general conclusions on the subject as may be practically useful, and more than these I shall not attempt to obtain.

§ 2. With what simplicity of feeling to be approached.

And first, I would ask of the reader to enter upon the subject with me, as far as may be, as a little child, ridding himself of all conventional and authoritative thoughts, and especially of such associations as arise from his respect for Pagan art, or which are in any way traceable to classical readings. I recollect that

Mr. Alison traces his first perceptions of beauty in external nature to this most corrupt source, thus betraying so total and singular a want of natural sensibility as may well excuse the deficiencies of his following arguments. For there was never yet the child of any promise (so far as the theoretic faculties are concerned) but awaked to the sense of beauty with the first gleam of reason; and I suppose there are few, among those who love nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back to their youngest and least-learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendors. And the bitter decline of this glorious feeling, though many note it not, partly owing to the cares and weight of manhood, which leave them not the time nor the liberty to look for their lost treasure, and partly to the human and divine affections which are appointed to take its place, yet has formed the subject not indeed of lamentation, but of holy thankfulness for the witness it bears to the immortal origin and end of our nature, to one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy,—
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy.
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows
He sees it in his joy.
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended.
At length the Man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day."

And if it were possible for us to recollect all the unaccountable and happy instincts of the careless time, and to reason upon them with the maturer judgment, we might arrive at more rapid and right results than either the philosophy or the sophisticated practice of art have yet attained. But we lose the perceptions before we are capable of methodizing or comparing them.

One, however, of these child instincts, I believe that few forget; the emotion, namely, caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the sea.

§ 3. The child instinct respecting space.

It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the sea itself, for I recollect distinctly running down behind the banks of a high beach to get their land line cutting against the sky, and receiving a more strange delight from this than from the sight of the ocean: I am not sure that this feeling is common to all children, (or would be common if they were all in circumstances admitting it), but I have ascertained it to be frequent among those who possess the most vivid sensibilities for nature; and I am certain that the modification of it, which belongs to our after years, is common to all, the love, namely, of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon. This I have tested too frequently to be mistaken, by offering to indifferent spectators forms of equal abstract beauty in half tint, relieved, the one against dark sky, the other against a bright distance. The preference is invariably given to the latter, and it is very certain that this preference arises not from any supposition of there being greater truth in this than the other, for the same preference is unhesitatingly accorded to the same effect in nature herself.

§ 4. Continued in after life.

Whatever beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects, from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things, (and joyfulness there is in all of them), there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful, the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch-fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing, less of animal and present life, more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind, (I use the word serious, not as being opposed to cheerful, but to trivial and volatile;) but, I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious, whether all that is dazzling in color, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark, troublous-edged sea.

§ 5. Whereto this instinct is traceable.

Let us try to discover that which effects of this kind possess or suggest, peculiar to themselves, and which other effects of light and color possess not. There *must* be something in them of a peculiar character, and that, whatever it be, must be one of the primal and most earnest motives of beauty to human sensation.

Do they show finer characters of form than can be developed by the broader daylight? Not so; for their power is almost independent of the forms they assume or display; it matters little whether the bright clouds be simple or manifold, whether the mountain line be subdued or majestic, the fairer forms of earthly things are by them subdued and disguised, the round and muscular growth of the forest trunks is sunk into skeleton lines of quiet shade, the purple clefts of the hill-side are labyrinthed in the darkness, the orbed spring and whirling wave of the torrent have given place to a white, ghastly, interrupted gleaming. Have they more perfection or fulness of color? Not so; for their effect is oftentimes deeper when their hues are dim, than when they are blazoned with crimson and pale gold; and assuredly, in the blue of the rainy sky, in the many tints of morning flowers, in the sunlight on summer foliage and field, there are more sources of mere sensual color-pleasure than in the single streak of wan and dying light. It is not then by nobler form, it is not by positiveness of hue, it is not by intensity of light, (for the sun itself at noon-day is effectless upon the feelings,) that this strange distant space possesses its attractive power. But there is one thing that it has, or suggests, which no other object of sight suggests in equal degree, and that is,—Infinity. It is of all visible things the least material, the least finite, the farthest withdrawn from the earth prison-house, the most typical of the nature of God, the most suggestive of the glory of His dwelling-place. For the sky of night, though we may know it boundless, is dark, it is a studded vault, a roof that seems to shut us in and down, but the bright distance has no limit, we feel its infinity, as we rejoice in its purity of light.

Now not only is this expression of infinity in distance most precious wherever we find it, however solitary it may be, and however unassisted by other forms and kinds of beauty, but it is of that value that no such other forms will altogether recompense us for its loss; and much as I dread the enunciation of anything that may seem like a conventional rule, I have no hesitation in asserting, that no work of any art, in which this expression of infinity is possible, can be perfect, or supremely elevated without it, and that, in proportion to its presence, it will exalt and render impressive even the most tame and trivial themes. And I think if there be any one grand division, by which it is at all possible to set the productions of painting, so far as their mere plan or system is concerned, on our right and left hands, it is this of light and dark background, of heaven light or of object light. For I know not any truly great painter of any time, who manifests not the most intense pleasure in the luminous space of his backgrounds, or who ever sacrifices this pleasure where the nature of his subject admits of its attainment, as on the other hand I know not that the habitual use of dark backgrounds can be shown as having ever been coexistent with pure or high feeling, and, except in the case of Rembrandt, (and then under peculiar circumstances only,) with any high power of intellect. It is however necessary carefully to observe the following modifications of this broad principle.

§ 6. Infinity how necessary in art.

The absolute necessity, for such indeed I consider it, is of no more than such a mere luminous distant point as may give to the feelings a species of escape from all the finite objects about them. There is a

§ 7. Conditions of its necessity.

spectral etching of Rembrandt, a presentation of Christ in the temple, where the figure of a robed priest stands glaring by its gems out of the gloom, holding a crosier. Behind it there is a subdued window light seen in the opening between two columns, without which the impressiveness of the whole subject would, I think, be incalculably brought down. I cannot tell whether I am at present allowing too much weight to my own fancies and predilections, but without so much escape into the outer air and open heaven as this, I can take permanent pleasure in no picture.

§ 8. And connected analogies.

And I think I am supported in this feeling by the unanimous practice, if not the confessed opinion, of all artists. The painter of portrait is unhappy without his conventional white stroke under the sleeve, or beside the arm-chair; the painter of interiors feels like a caged bird, unless he can throw a window open, or set the door ajar; the landscapist dares not lose himself in the forest without a gleam of light under its farthest branches, nor ventures out in rain, unless he may somewhere pierce to a better promise in the distance, or cling to some closing gap of variable blue above;—escape, hope, infinity, by whatever conventionalism sought, the desire is the same in all, the instinct constant, it is no mere point of light that is wanted in the etching of Rembrandt above instanced, a gleam of armor or fold of temple curtain would have been utterly valueless, neither is it liberty, for though we cut down hedges and level hills, and give what waste and plain we choose, on the right hand and the left, it is all comfortless and undesired, so long as we cleave not a way of escape forward; and however narrow and thorny and difficult the nearer path, it matters not, so only that the clouds open for us at its close. Neither will any amount of beauty in nearer form, make us content to stay with it, so long as we are shut down to that alone, nor is any form so cold or so hurtful but that we may look upon it with kindness, so only that it rise against the infinite hope of light beyond. The reader can follow out the analogies of this unassisted.

But although this narrow portal of escape be all that is absolutely necessary, I think that the dignity of the painting increases with the extent and amount of the expression. With

§ 9. How the dignity of treatment is proportioned to the expression of infinity.

the earlier and mightier painters of Italy, the practice is commonly to leave their distance of pure and open sky, of such simplicity, that it in nowise shall interfere with or draw the attention from the interest of the figures, and of such purity, that especially towards the horizon, it shall be in the highest degree expressive of the infinite space of heaven. I do not mean to say that they did this with any occult or metaphysical motives. They did it, I think, with the child-like, unpretending simplicity of all earnest men ; they did what they loved and felt ; they sought what the heart naturally seeks, and gave what it most gratefully receives ; and I look to them as in all points of principle (not, observe, of knowledge or empirical attainment) as the most irrefragable authorities, precisely on account of the child-like innocence, which never deemed itself authoritative, but acted upon desire, and not upon dicta, and sought for sympathy, not for admiration.

And so we find the same simple and sweet treatment, the open sky, the tender, unpretending, horizontal white clouds, the far winding and abundant landscape, in Giotto, Taddeo, Gaddi, Laurati, Angelico, Benozzo, Ghirlandajo, Francia, Perugino, and the young Raffaelle, the first symptom of con-

§ 10. Examples among the Southern schools.

ventionality appearing in Perugino, who, though with intense feeling of light and color he carried the glory of his luminous distance far beyond all his predecessors, began at the same time to use a somewhat morbid relief of his figures against the upper sky. Thus in the Assumption of the Florentine Academy, in that of l'Annunziata ; and of the Gallery of Bologna, in all which pictures the lower portions are incomparably the finest, owing to the light distance behind the heads. Raffaelle, in his fall, betrayed the faith he had received from his father and his master, and substituted for the radiant sky of the Madonna del Cardellino, the chamber-wall of the Madonna della Sediola—and the brown wainscot of the Baldacchino. Yet it is curious to observe how much of the dignity even of his later pictures, depends on such portions as the green light of the lake, and sky behind the rocks, in the St. John of the tribune, and how the repainted distortion of the Madonna dell' Impannata, is redeemed into something like elevated character, merely by the light of the linen window from which it takes its name.

§ 11. Among the Venetians.

That which by the Florentines was done in pure simplicity of heart, was done by the Venetians with intense love of the color and splendor of the sky itself, even to the frequent sacrificing of their subject to the passion of its distance. In Carpaccio, John Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret, the preciousness of the luminous sky, so far as it might be at all consistent with their subject, is nearly constant ; abandoned altogether in portraiture only, seldom even there, and never with advantage. Titian and Veronese, who had less exalted feeling than the others, affording a few instances of exception, the latter overpowering his silvery distances with foreground splendor, the other sometimes sacrificing them to a luscious fulness of color, as in the Flagellation in the Louvre, by a comparison of which with the unequalled majesty of the Entombment opposite, the whole power and applicability of the general principle may at once be tested.

§ 12. Among the painters of landscape.

But of the value of this mode of treatment there is a farther and more convincing proof than its adoption either by the innocence of the Florentine or the ardor of the Venetian, namely, that when retained or imitated from them by the landscape painters of the seventeenth century, when appearing in isolation from all other good, among the weaknesses and paltrinesses of Claude, the mannerisms of Gaspar, and the caricatures and brutalities of Salvator, it yet redeems and upholds all three, conquers all foulness by its purity, vindicates all folly by its dignity, and puts an uncomprehended power of permanent address to the human heart, upon the lips of the senseless and the profane.*

---

* In one of the smaller rooms of the Pitti palace, over the door, is a temptation of St. Anthony, by Salvator, wherein such power as the artist possessed is fully manifested, with little, comparatively, that is

§ 13. Other modes in which the power of infinity is felt.

§ 14. The beauty of curvature.

Now, although I doubt not that the general value of this treatment will be acknowledged by all lovers of art, it is not certain that the point to prove which I have brought it forward, will be as readily conceded, namely, the inherent power of all representations of infinity over the human heart ; for there are, indeed, countless associations of pure and religious kind, which combine with each other to enhance the impression, when presented in this particular form, whose power I neither deny nor am careful to distinguish, seeing that they all tend to the same Divine point, and have reference to heavenly hopes ; delights they are in seeing the narrow, black, miserable earth fairly compared with the bright firmament, reachings forward unto the things that are before, and joyfulness in the apparent though unreachable nearness and promise of them. But there are other modes in which infinity may be represented, which are confused by no associations of the kind, and which would, as being in mere matter, appear trivial and mean, but for their incalculable influence on the forms of all that we feel to be beautiful. The first of these is the curvature of lines and surfaces, wherein it at first appears futile to insist upon any resemblance or suggestion of infinity, since there is certainly in our ordinary contemplation of it, no sensation of the kind. But

---

offensive. It is a vigorous and ghastly thought, in that kind of horror which is dependent on scenic effect, perhaps unrivalled, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again in speaking of the powers of imagination. I allude to it here, because the sky of the distance affords a remarkable instance of the power of light at present under discussion. It is formed of flakes of black cloud, with rents and openings of intense and lurid green, and at least half of the impressiveness of the picture depends on these openings. Close them, make the sky one mass of gloom, and the spectre will be awful no longer. It owes to the light of the distance both its size and its spirituality. The time would fail me if I were to name the tenth part of the pictures which occur to me, whose vulgarity is redeemed by this circumstance alone, and yet let not the artist trust to such morbid and conventional use of it as may be seen in the common blue and yellow effectism of the present day. Of the value of moderation and simplicity in the use of this, as of all other sources of pleasurable emotion, I shall presently have occasion to speak farther.

I have repeated again and again that the ideas of beauty are instinctive, and that it is only upon consideration, and even then in doubtful and disputable way, that they appear in their typical character; neither do I intend at all to insist upon the particular meaning which they appear to myself to bear, but merely on their actual and demonstrable agreeableness, so that, in the present case, while I assert positively, and have no fear of being able to prove, that a curve of any kind is more beautiful than a right line, I leave it to the reader to accept or not, as he pleases, that reason of its agreeableness, which is the only one that I can at all trace, namely, that every curve divides itself infinitely by its changes of direction.

That all forms of acknowledged beauty are composed exclusively of curves will, I believe, be at once allowed; but that which there will be need more especially to prove, is the subtility and constancy of curvature in all natural forms whatsoever. I believe that, except in crystals, in certain mountain forms admitted for the sake of sublimity or contrast, (as in the slope of debris,) in rays of light, in the levels of calm water and alluvial land, and in some few organic developments, there are no lines nor surfaces of nature without curvature, though as we before saw in clouds, more especially in their under lines towards the horizon, and in vast and extended plains, right lines are often suggested which are not actual. Without these we could not be sensible of the value of the contrasting curves, and while, therefore, for the most part, the eye is fed in natural forms with a grace of curvature which no hand nor instrument can follow, other means are provided to give beauty to those surfaces which are admitted for contrast, as in water by its reflection of the gradations which it possesses not itself. In freshly-broken ground, which nature has not yet had time to model, in quarries and pits which are none of her cutting, in those convulsions and evidences of convulsion, of whose influence on ideal landscape I shall presently have occasion to speak, and generally in all ruin and disease, and interference of one order of being with another, (as in

§ 15. How constant in external nature.

the cattle line of park trees,) the curves vanish, and violently opposed or broken and unmeaning lines take their place.

What curvature is to lines, gradation is to shades and colors. It is *there* infinity, and divides them into an infinite number of degrees. Absolutely, without gradation no natural surface can possibly be, except under circumstances of so rare conjunction as to amount to a lusus naturæ; for we have seen that few surfaces are without curvature, and every curved surface must be gradated by the nature of light, which is most intense when it impinges at the highest angle, and for the gradation of the few plane surfaces that exist, means are provided in local color, aerial perspective, reflected lights, etc., from which it is but barely conceivable that they should ever escape. Hence for instances of the complete absence of gradation we must look to man's work, or to his disease and decrepitude. Compare the gradated colors of the rainbow with the stripes of a target, and the gradual concentration of the youthful blood in the cheek with an abrupt patch of rouge, or with the sharply drawn veining of old age.

§ 16. The beauty of gradation.

Gradation is so inseparable a quality of all natural shade and color that the eye refuses in art to understand anything as either, which appears without it, while on the other hand nearly all the gradations of nature are so subtile and between degrees of tint so slightly separated, that no human hand can in any wise equal, or do anything more than suggest the idea of them. In proportion to the space over which gradation extends, and to its invisible subtility, is its grandeur, and in proportion to its narrow limits and violent degrees, its vulgarity. In Correggio, it is morbid and vulgar in spite of its refinement of execution, because the eye is drawn to it, and it is made the most observable and characteristic part of the picture; whereas natural gradation is forever escaping observation to that degree that the greater part of artists in working from nature see it not, (except in certain of its marked developments,) but either lay down such continuous lines and colors,

§ 17. How found in Nature.

as are both disagreeable and impossible, or, receiving the necessity of gradation as a principle instead of a fact, use it in violently exaggerated measure, and so lose both the dignity of their own work, and by the constant dwelling of their eyes upon exaggerations, their sensibility to that of the natural forms. So that we find the majority of painters divided between the two evil extremes of insufficiency and affectation, and only a few of the greatest men capable of making gradation constant and yet extended over enormous spaces and within degrees of narrow difference, as in the body of a high light.

§ 18. How necessary in Art.

From the necessity of gradation results what is commonly given as a rule of art, though its authority as a rule obtains only from its being a fact of nature, that the extremes of high light and pure color, can exist only in points. The common rules respecting sixths and eighths, held concerning light and shade, are entirely absurd and conventional; according to the subject and the effect of light, the greater part of the picture will be or ought to be light or dark; but that principle which is not conventional, is that of all light, however high, there is some part that is higher than the rest, and that of all color, however pure, there is some part that is purer than the rest, and that generally of all shade, however deep, there is some part deeper than the rest, though this last fact is frequently sacrificed in art, owing to the narrowness of its means. But on the right gradation or focussing of light and color depends in great measure, the value of both. Of this, I have spoken sufficiently in pointing out the singular constancy of it in the works of Turner. Part II. Sect. II. Chap. II. § 17. And it is generally to be observed that even raw and valueless color, if rightly and subtilely gradated will in some measure stand for light, and that the most transparent and perfect hue will be in some measure unsatisfactory, if entirely unvaried. I believe the early skies of Raffaelle owe their luminousness more to their untraceable and subtile gradation than to inherent quality of hue.

Such are the expressions of infinity which we find in creation, of which the importance is to be estimated, rather by their frequency than their distinctness. Let, however, the reader bear constantly in mind that I insist not on his accepting any interpretation of mine, but only on his dwelling so long on those objects, which he perceives to be beautiful, as to determine whether the qualities to which I trace their beauty, be necessarily there or no. Farther expressions of infinity there are in the mystery of nature, and in some measure in her vastness, but these are dependent on our own imperfections, and therefore, though they produce sublimity, they are unconnected with beauty. For that which we foolishly call vastness is, rightly considered, not more wonderful, not more impressive, than that which we insolently call littleness, and the infinity of God is not mysterious, it is only unfathomable, not concealed, but incomprehensible: it is a clear infinity, the darkness of the pure unsearchable sea.

§ 19. Infinity not rightly implied by vastness.

CHAPTER VI.

OF UNITY, OR THE TYPE OF THE DIVINE COMPREHENSIVENESS.

"ALL things," says Hooker, "(God only excepted,) besides the nature which they have in themselves, receive externally some perfection from other things." Hence the appearance of separation or isolation in anything, and of self-dependence, is an appearance of imperfection: and all appearances of connection and brotherhood are pleasant and right, both as significative of perfection in the things united, and as typical of that Unity which we attribute to God, and of which our true conception is rightly explained and limited by Dr. Brown in his XCII. lecture; that Unity which consists not in his own singleness or separation, but in the necessity of his inherence in all things that be, without which no creature of any kind could hold existence for a moment. Which necessity of Divine essence I think it better to speak of as comprehensive-

§ 1. The general conception of divine Unity.

ness, than as unity, because unity is often understood in the sense of oneness or singleness, instead of universality, whereas the only Unity which by any means can become grateful or an object of hope to men, and whose types therefore in material things can be beautiful, is that on which turned the last words and prayer of Christ before his crossing of the Kidron brook. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."

§ 2. The glory of all things is their Unity.

And so there is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of an unity of some kind with other creatures, and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold. So the unity of spirits is partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love; and these are their delight and their strength, for their strength is in their co-working and army fellowship, and their delight is in the giving and receiving of alternate and perpetual currents of good, their inseparable dependency on each other's being, and their essential and perfect depending on their Creator's: and so the unity of earthly creatures is their power and their peace, not like the dead and cold peace of undisturbed stones and solitary mountains, but the living peace of trust, and the living power of support, of hands that hold each other and are still: and so the unity of matter is, in its noblest form, the organization of it which builds it up into temples for the spirit, and in its lower form, the sweet and strange affinity, which gives to it the glory of its orderly elements, and the fair variety of change and assimilation that turns the dust into the crystal, and separates the waters that be above the firmament from the waters that be beneath, and in its lowest form; it is the working and walking and clinging together that gives their power to the winds, and its syllables and soundings to the air, and their weight to the waves, and their burning to the sunbeams, and their stability to the mountains, and to every creature whatsoever operation is for its glory and for others' good.

Now of that which is thus necessary to the perfection of all things, all appearance, sign, type, or suggestion must be beautiful, in whatever matter it may appear. And so to the perfection of beauty in lines, or colors, or forms, or masses, or multitudes, the appearance of some species of unity is in the most determined sense of the word essential.

§ 3. The several kinds of unity. Subjectional. Original. Of sequence, and of membership.

But of the appearances of unity, as of unity itself, there are several kinds which it will be found hereafter convenient to consider separately. Thus there is the unity of different and separate things, subjected to one and the same influence, which may be called subjectional unity, and this is the unity of the clouds, as they are driven by the parallel winds, or as they are ordered by the electric currents, and this the unity of the sea waves, and this of the bending and undulation of the forest masses, and in creatures capable of will it is the unity of will or of inspiration. And there is unity of origin, which we may call original unity, which is of things arising from one spring and source, and speaking always of this their brotherhood, and this in matter is the unity of the branches of the trees, and of the petals and starry rays of flowers, and of the beams of light, and in spiritual creatures it is their filial relation to Him from whom they have their being. And there is unity of sequence, which is that of things that form links in chains, and steps in ascent, and stages in journeys, and this, in matter, is the unity of communicable forces in their continuance from one thing to another, and it is the passing upwards and downwards of beneficent effects among all things, and it is the melody of sounds, and the beauty of continuous lines, and the orderly succession of motions and times. And in spiritual creatures it is their own constant building up by true knowledge and continuous reasoning to higher perfection, and the singleness and straightforwardness of their tendencies to more complete communion with God. And there is the unity of membership, which we may call essential unity, which is the unity of things separately imperfect into a perfect whole, and this is the great unity of which other unities are but parts and means, it is in matter the harmony of sounds and consistency of bodies, and among spiritual creatures, their love and happiness and very life in God.

Now of the nature of this last kind of unity, the most important whether in moral or in those material things with which we are at present concerned, there is this necessary to be observed, that it cannot exist between things similar to each other. Two or more equal and like things cannot be members one of another, nor can they form one, or a whole thing. Two they must remain, both in nature and in our conception, so long as they remain alike, unless they are united by a third different from both. Thus the arms, which are like each other, remain two arms in our conception. They could not be united by a third arm, they must be united by something which is not an arm, and which, imperfect without them as they without it, shall form one perfect body; nor is unity even thus accomplished, without a difference and opposition of direction in the setting on of the like members. Therefore among all things which are to have unity of membership one with another, there must be difference or variety; and though it is possible that many like things may be made members of one body, yet it is remarkable that this structure appears characteristic of the lower creatures, rather than the higher, as the many legs of the caterpillar, and the many arms and suckers of the radiata, and that, as we rise in order of being, the number of similar members becomes less, and their structure commonly seems based on the principle of the unity of two things by a third, as Plato has it in the Timæus, § II.

§ 4. Unity of membership. How secured.

Hence, out of the necessity of unity, arises that of variety, a necessity often more vividly, though never so deeply felt, because lying at the surfaces of things, and assisted by an influential principle of our nature, the love of change, and the power of contrast. But it is a mistake which has led to many unfortunate results, in matters respecting art, to insist on any inherent agreeableness of variety, without reference to a farther end. For it is not even true that variety as such, and in its highest de-

§ 5. Variety. Why required.

gree, is beautiful. A patched garment of many colors is by no means so ageeeable as one of a single and continuous hue ; the splendid colors of many birds are eminently painful from their violent separation and inordinate variety, while the pure and colorless swan is, under certain circumstances, the most beautiful of all feathered creatures.* A forest of all manner of trees is poor, if not disagreeable in effect, † a mass of one species of tree is sublime. It is therefore only harmonious and chordal variety, that variety which is necessary to secure and extend unity, (for the greater the number of objects, which by their differences become members of one another, the more extended and sublime is their unity,) which is rightly agreeable, and so I name not variety as essential to beauty, because it is only so in a secondary and casual sense. ‡

§ 6. Change, and its influence on beauty.

Of the love of change as a principle of human nature, and the pleasantness of variety resulting from it, something has already been said, (Ch. IV. § 4,) only as there I was opposing the idea that our being familiar with objects was the cause of our delight in them, so here, I have to oppose the contrary position, that their strangeness is the cause of it. For neither familiarity nor strangeness have more operation on, or connection with, impressions of one sense than of another, and they have less power over the impressions of sense generally, than over the intellect in its joyful accepting of fresh knowledge, and dull contemplation of that it has long possessed. Only in their operation on the senses they act contrarily at different times, as for instance the newness of a dress or of some kind of unaccustomed food may make it for a time delightful, but as the novelty passes away, so also may the delight, yielding to disgust or indifference, which in their turn, as custom begins to operate, may pass into affection and craving, and that which was first a luxury, and then a matter of indifference, becomes a necessity :* whereas in subjects of the intellect, the chief delight they convey is dependent upon their being newly and vividly comprehended, and as they become subjects of contemplation they lose their value, and become tasteless and unregarded, except as instruments for the reaching of others, only that though they sink down into the shadowy, effectless, heap of things indifferent, which we pack, and crush down, and stand upon, to reach things new, they sparkle afresh at intervals as we stir them by throwing a new stone into the heap, and letting the newly admitted lights play upon them. And both in subjects of the intellect and the senses it is to be remembered, that the love of change is a weakness and imperfection of our nature, and implies in it the state of probation, and that it is to teach us that things about us here are not meant for our continual possession or satisfaction, that ever such passion of change was put in us as that "custom lies upon us with a weight, heavy as frost, and deep almost as life," and only such weak back and baby grasp given to our intellect as that "the best things we do are painful, and the exercise of them grievous, being continued without intermission, so as in those very actions whereby we are especially perfected in this life we are not able to persist." And so it will be found that they are the weakest-minded and the hardest-hearted men that most love variety and change, for the weakest-minded are those who both wonder most at things new, and digest worst things old, in so far

---

* Compare Chap. ix. § 5, note.

† Spenser's various forest is the Forest of Error.

‡ It must be matter of no small wonderment to practical men to observe how grossly the nature and connection of unity and variety have been misunderstood and misstated, by those writers upon taste, who have been guided by no experience of art; most singularly perhaps by Mr. Alison, who, confounding unity with uniformity, and leading his readers through thirty pages of discussion respecting uniformity and variety, the intelligibility of which is not by any means increased by his supposing uniformity to be capable of existence in single things; at last substitutes for these two terms, sufficiently contradictory already, those of similarity and dissimilarity, the reconciliation of which opposites in one thing we must, I believe, leave Mr. Alison to accomplish.

§ 7. The love of change. How morbid and evil.

---

* Καὶ τὸ ταὐτὰ πράττείν πολλάκις ἡδὺ·—τὸ γὰρ σύνηθες ἡδὺ ἦν· καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλειν ἡδύ· ἐις φυδιν γὰρ γίγνεται μεταβάλλειν.—Arist. Rhet. I. II. 20.

that everything they have lies rusty, and loses lustre for want of use; neither do they make any stir among their possessions, nor look over them to see what may be made of them, nor keep any great store, nor are householders with storehouses of things new and old, but they catch at the new-fashioned garments, and let the moth and thief look after the rest; and the hardest-hearted men are those that least feel the endearing and binding power of custom, and hold on by no cords of affection to any shore, but drive with the waves that cast up mire and dirt. And certainly it is not to be held that the perception of beauty and desire of it, are greatest in the hardest heart and weakest brain; but the love of variety is so, and therefore variety can be no cause of the beautiful, except, as I have said, when it is necessary for the perception of unity, neither is there any better test of that which is indeed beautiful than its surviving or annihilating the love of change; and this is a test which the best judges of art have need frequently to use; and the wisest of them will use it always, for there is much in art that surprises by its brilliancy, or attracts by its singularity, that can hardly but by course of time, though assuredly it will by course of time, be winnowed away from the right and real beauty whose retentive power is forever on the increase, a bread of the soul for which the hunger is continual.

§ 8. The conducing of variety towards unity of subjection.

Receiving, therefore, variety only as that which accomplishes unity, or makes it perceived, its operation is found to be very precious, both in that which I have called unity of subjection, and unity of sequence, as well as in unity of membership; for although things in all respects the same may, indeed, be subjected to one influence, yet the power of the influence, and their obedience to it, is best seen by varied operation of it on their individual differences, as in clouds and waves there is a glorious unity of rolling, wrought out by the wild and wonderful differences of their absolute forms, which, if taken away, would leave in them only multitudinous and petty repetition, instead of the majestic oneness of shared passion. And so in the waves and clouds of human multitude when they are filled with one thought, as we find frequently in the works of the early Italian men of earnest purpose, who despising, or happily ignorant of, the sophistications of theories, and the proprieties of composition, indicated by perfect similarity of action and gesture on the one hand, and by the infinite and truthful variation of expression on the other, the most sublime strength because the most absorbing unity, of multitudinous passion that ever human heart conceived. Hence, in the cloister of St. Mark's, the intense, fixed, statue-like silence of ineffable adoration upon the spirits in prison at the feet of Christ, side by side, the hands lifted, and the knees bowed, and the lips trembling together ;* and in St. Domenico of Fiesole, † that whirlwind rush of the Angels and the redeemed souls round about him at his resurrection, so that we hear the blast of the horizontal trumpets mixed with the dying clangor of their ingathered wings. The same great feeling occurs throughout the works of the serious men, though most intensely in Angelico, and it is well to compare with it the vileness and falseness of all that succeeded, when men had begun to bring to the cross foot their systems instead of their sorrow. Take as the most marked and degraded instance, perhaps, to be anywhere found, Bronzino's treatment of the same subject (Christ visiting the spirits in prison,) in the picture now in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii, which, vile as it is in color, vacant in invention, void in light and shade, a heap of cumbrous nothingnesses, and sickening offensivenesses, is of all its voids most void in this, that the academy models therein huddled together at the bottom, show not so much unity or community of attention to the academy model with the flag in its hand above, as a street crowd would be to a fresh-staged charlatan. Some *point* to the God who has burst the gates of death, as if the rest were incapable of distinguishing him for themselves, and others turn their backs upon him, to show their unagitated faces to the spectator.

---

* Fra Angelico's fresco, in a cell of the upper cloister. He treated the subject frequently. Another characteristic example occurs in the Vita di Christo of the Academy, a series now unfortunately destroyed by the picture cleaners. Simon Memmi in Santa Maria Novella (Chapelle des Espagnols) has given another very beautiful instance. In Giotto the principle is universal, though his multitudes are somewhat more dramatically and powerfully varied in gesture than Angelico's. In Mino da Fiesole's altar-piece in the church of St. Ambrogiot at Florence, close by Cosimo Rosselli's fresco, there is a beautiful example in marble.

† The Predella of the picture behind the altar.

§ 9. And towards unity of sequence.

In unity of sequence, the effect of variety is best exemplified by the melodies of music, wherein by the differences of the notes, they are connected with each other in certain pleasant relations. This connection taking place in quantities is proportion, respecting which certain general principles must be noted, as the subject is one open to many errors, and obscurely treated of by writers on art.

§ 10. The nature of proportion. 1st, of apparent proportion.

Proportion is of two distinct kinds. Apparent: when it takes place between qualities for the sake of connection only, without any ultimate object or casual necessity; and constructive: when it has reference to some function to be discharged by the quantities, depending on their proportion. From the confusion of these two kinds of proportion have arisen the greater part of the erroneous conceptions of the influence of either.

Apparent proportion, or the sensible relation of quantities, is one of the most important means of obtaining unity between things which otherwise must have remained distinct in similarity, and as it may consist with every other kind of unity, and persist when every other means of it fails, it may be considered as lying at the root of most of our impressions of the beautiful. There is no sense of rightness, or wrongness connected with it, no sense of utility, propriety, or expediency. These ideas enter only where the proportion of quantities has reference to some function to be performed by them. It cannot be asserted that it is right or that it is wrong that A should be to B, as B to C; unless A, B, and C have some desirable operation dependent on that relation. But nevertheless it may be highly agreeable to the eye that A, B, and C, if visible things, should have visible connection of ratio, even though nothing be accomplished by such connection. On the other hand, constructive proportion, or the adaptation of quantities to functions, is agreeable not to the eye, but to the mind, which is cognizant of the function to be performed. Thus the pleasantness or rightness of the proportions of a column depends not on the mere relation of diameter and height, (which is not proportion at all, for proportion is between three terms at least,) but on three other involved terms, the strength of materials, the weight to be borne, and the scale of the building. The proportions of a wooden column are wrong in a stone one, and of a small building wrong in a large one,* and this owing solely to mechanical considerations, which have no more to do with ideas of beauty, than the relation between the arms of a lever, adapted to the raising of a given weight ; and yet it is highly

---

* It seems never to have been rightly understood, even by the more intelligent among our architects, that proportion is in any way connected with positive size; it seems to be held among them that a small building may be expanded to a large one merely by proportionally expanding all its parts: and that the harmony will be equally agreeable on whatever scale it be rendered. Now this is true of apparent proportion, but utterly false of constructive; and, as much of the value of architectural proportion is constructive, the error is often productive of the most painful results. It may be best illustrated by observing the conditions of proportion in animals. Many persons have thoughtlessly claimed admiration for the strength—supposed gigantic—of insects and smaller animals; because capable of lifting weights, leaping distances, and surmounting obstacles, of proportion apparently overwhelming. Thus the Formica Herculanea will lift in its mouth, and brandish like a baton, sticks thicker than itself and six times its length, all the while scrambling over crags of about the proportionate height of the Cliffs of Dover, three or four in a minute. There is nothing extraordinary in this, nor any exertion of strength necessarily greater than human, in proportion to the size of the body. For it is evident that if the size and strength of any creature be expanded or diminished in proportion to each other, the distance through which it can leap, the time it can maintain exertion, or any other third term resultant, remains constant; that is, diminish weight of powder and of ball proportionately, and the distance carried is constant or nearly so. Thus, a grasshopper, a man, and a giant 100 feet high, supposing their muscular strength equally proportioned to their size, can or could all leap, not proportionate distance, but the same or nearly the same distance—say, four feet the grasshopper, or forty-eight times his length; six feet the man or his length exactly; ten feet the giant or the tenth of his length. Hence all small animals can, *cæteris paribus*, perform feats of strength and

agility, exactly so much greater than those to be executed by large ones, as the animals themselves are smaller ; and to enable an elephant to leap like a grasshopper, he must be endowed with strength a million times greater in *proportion* to his size. Now the consequence of this general mechanical law is, that as we increase the scale of animals, their means of power, whether muscles of motion or bones of support, must be increased in a more than proportionate degree, or they become utterly unwieldy, and incapable of motion ;—and there is a limit to this increase of strength. If the elephant had legs as long as a spider's, no combination of animal matter that could be hide-bound would have strength enough to move them : to support the megatherium, we must have a humerus a foot in diameter, though perhaps not more than two feet long, and that in a vertical position under him, while the gnat can hang on the window frame, and poise himself to sting, in the middle of crooked stilts like threads ; stretched out to ten times the breadth of his body on each side. Increase the size of the megatherium a little more, and no phosphate of lime will bear him ; he would crush his own legs to powder. (Compare Sir Charles Bell, "Bridgewater Treatise on the Hand," p. 296, and the note.) Hence there is not only a limit to the size of animals, in the conditions of matter, but to their activity also, the largest being always least capable of exertion ; and this would be the case to a far greater extent, but that nature beneficently alters her proportions as she increases her scale ; giving, as we have seen, long legs and enormous wings to the smaller tribes, and short and thick proportion to the larger. So in vegetables —compare the stalk of an ear of oat, and the trunk of a pine, the mechanical relations being in both the same. So also in waves, of which the large never can be mere exaggerations of the small, but have different slopes and curvatures : so in mountains and all things else, necessarily, and from ordinary mechanical laws. Whence in architecture, according to the scale of the building, its proportions must be altered ; and I have no hesitation in calling that unmeaning exaggeration of parts in St. Peter's, of flutings, volutes, friezes, etc., in the proportions of a smaller building, a vulgar blunder, and one that destroys all the majesty that the building ought to have had—and still more I should so call all imitations and adaptations of large buildings on a small scale. The true test of right proportion is that it shall itself inform us of the scale of the building, and be such that even in a drawing it shall instantly induce the conception of the actual size, or size intended. I know not what Fuseli means by that aphorism of his :—

"Disproportion of parts is the element of hugeness—proportion, of agreeable to perceive that such constructive proportion has been duly observed, as it is agreeable to see that anything is fit for its purpose or for ours, and also that it has been the result of intelligence in the workman of it, so that we sometimes feel a pleasure in apparent non-adaptation, if it be a sign of ingenuity ; as in the unnatural and seemingly impossible lightness of Gothic spires and roofs.

Now, the errors against which I would caution the reader in this matter are three. The first, is the overlooking or denial of the power of apparent proportion, of which power neither Burke nor any other writer whose works I have met with, takes cognizance. The second, is the attribution of *beauty* to the appearances of constructive proportion. The third, the denial with Burke of *any* value or agreeableness in constructive proportion.

§ 11. The value of apparent proportion in curvature.

Now, the full proof of the influence of apparent proportion, I must reserve for illustration by diagram ; one or two instances however may be given at present for the better understanding of its nature.

We have already asserted that all curves are more beautiful than right lines. All curves, however, are not equally beautiful, and their differences of beauty depend on the different proportions borne to each other by those infinitely small right lines of which they may be conceived as composed.

When these lines are equal and contain equal angles, there can be no connection or unity of sequence in them. The resulting curve, the circle, is therefore the least beautiful of all curves.

When the lines bear to each other some certain proportion ; or when, the lines remaining equal, the angles vary ; or when by any means whatsoever, and in whatever complicated modes, such differences as shall imply connection are established between the infinitely small segments, the resulting curves be-

---

grandeur. All Gothic styles of Architecture are huge. The Greek alone is grand." When a building *is* vast, it ought to look so ; and the proportion is right which exhibits its vastness. Nature loses no size by her proportion ; her buttressed mountains have more of Gothic than of Greek in them.

come beautiful. The simplest of the beautiful curves are the conic, and the various spirals; but it is as rash as it is difficult to endeavor to trace any ground of superiority or inferiority among the infinite numbers of the higher curves. I believe that almost all are beautiful in their own nature, and that their comparative beauty depends on the constant quantities involved in their equations. Of this point I shall speak hereafter at greater length.

§ 12. How by nature obtained.

The universal forces of nature, and the individual energies of the matter submitted to them, are so appointed and balanced, that they are continually bringing out curves of this kind in all visible forms, and that circular lines become nearly impossible under any circumstances. The gradual acceleration, for instance, of velocity, in streams that descend from hill-sides, as it gradually increases their power of erosion increases in the same gradual degree the rate of curvature in the descent of the slope, until at a certain degree of steepness this descent meets, and is concealed by the right line of the detritus. The junction of this right line with the plain is again modified by the farther bounding of the larger blocks, and by the successively diminishing proportion of landslips caused by erosion at the bottom, so that the whole line of the hill is one of curvature, first, gradually increasing in rapidity to the maximum steepness of which the particular rock is capable, and then decreasing in a decreasing ratio, until it arrives at the plain level. This type of form, modified of course more or less by the original boldness of the mountain, and dependent both on its age, its constituent rock, and the circumstances of its exposure, is yet in its general formula applicable to all. So the curves of all things in motion, and of all organic forms, most rudely and simply in the shell spirals, and in their most complicated development in the muscular lines of the higher animals.

This influence of apparent proportion, a proportion, be it observed, which has no reference to ultimate ends, but which is itself, seemingly, the end and object of operation in many of the forces of nature, is therefore at the root of all our delight in any beautiful form whatsoever. For no form can be beautiful which is not composed of curves whose unity is secured by relations of this kind.

§ 13. Apparent proportion in melodies of line.

Not only however in curvature, but in all associations of lines whatsoever, it is desirable that there should be reciprocal relation, and the eye is unhappy without perception of it. It is utterly vain to endeavor to reduce this proportion to finite rules, for it is as various as musical melody, and the laws to which it is subject are of the same general kind, so that the determination of right or wrong proportion is as much a matter of feeling and experience as the appreciation of good musical composition ; not but that there is a science of both, and principles which may not be infringed, but that within these limits the liberty of invention is infinite, and the degrees of excellence infinite also, whence the curious error of Burke in imagining that because he could not fix upon some one given proportion of lines as better than any other, therefore proportion had no value nor influence at all, which is the same as to conclude that there is no such thing as melody in music, because there are melodies more than one.

§ 14. Error of Burke in this matter.

The argument of Burke on this subject is summed up in the following words :—“ Examine the head of a beautiful horse, find what proportion that bears to his body and to his limbs, and what relations these have to each other, and when you have settled these proportions, as a standard of beauty, then take a dog or cat, or any other animal, and examine how far the same proportions between their heads and their necks, between those and the body, and so on, are found to hold ; I think we may safely say, that they differ in every species, yet that there are individuals found in a great many species, so differing, that have a very striking beauty. Now if it be allowed that very different, and even contrary forms and dispositions, are consistent with beauty, it amounts, I believe, to a concession, that no certain measures operating from a natural principle are necessary to produce it, at least so far as the brute species is concerned.”

In this argument there are three very palpable fallacies: the first is the rough application of measurement to the heads, necks, and limbs, without observing the subtile differences of proportion and position of parts in the members themselves, for it would be strange if the different adjustment of the ears and brow in the dog and horse, did not require a harmonizing difference of adjustment in the head and neck. The second fallacy is that above specified, the supposition that proportion cannot be beautiful if susceptible of variation, whereas the whole meaning of the term has reference to the adjustment and functional correspondence of infinitely variable quantities. And the third error is the oversight of the very important fact, that, although "different and even contrary forms and dispositions are consistent with beauty," they are by no means consistent with equal *degrees* of beauty, so that, while we find in all the presence of such proportion and harmony of form, as gifts them with positive agreeableness consistent with the station and dignity of each, we perceive, also, such superiority of proportion in some (as the horse, eagle, lion, and man for instance) as may best be in harmony with the nobler functions and more exalted powers of the animals.

§ 15. Constructive proportion. Its influence in plants.

And this allowed superiority of some animal forms to others is, in itself, argument against the second error above named, that of attributing the sensation of beauty to the perception of expedient or constructive proportion. For everything that God has made is equally well constructed with reference to its intended functions. But all things are not equally beautiful. The megatherium is absolutely as well proportioned, with the view of adaptation of parts to purposes, as the horse or the swan; but by no means so handsome as either. The fact is, that the perception of expediency of proportion can but rarely affect our estimates of beauty, for it implies a knowledge which we very rarely and imperfectly possess, and the want of which we tacitly acknowledge.

Let us consider that instance of the proportion of the stalk of a plant to its head, given by Burke. In order to judge of the expediency of this proportion, we must know, First, the scale of the plant (for the smaller the scale, the longer the stem may safely be). Secondly, the toughness of the materials of the stem and the mode of their mechanical structure. Thirdly, the specific gravity of the head. Fourthly, the position of the head which the nature of fructification requires. Fifthly, the accidents and influences to which the situation for which the plant was created is exposed. Until we know all this, we cannot say that proportion or disproportion exists, and because we cannot know all this, the idea of expedient proportion enters but slightly into our impression of vegetable beauty, but rather, since the existence of the plant proves that these proportions have been observed, and we know that nothing but our own ignorance prevents us from perceiving them, we take the proportion on credit, and are delighted by the variety of results which the Divine intelligence has attained in the various involutions of these quantities, and perhaps most when, to outward appearance, such proportions have been violated; more by the slenderness of the campanula than the security of the pine.

§ 16. And animals.

What is obscure in plants, is utterly incomprehensible in animals, owing to the greater number of means employed and functions performed. To judge of expedient proportion in them, we must know all that each member has to do, all its bones, all its muscles, and the amount of nervous energy communicable to them; and yet, forasmuch as we have more experience and instinctive sense of the strength of muscles than of wood, and more practical knowledge of the use of a head or a foot than of a flower or a stem, we are much more likely to presume upon our judgment respecting proportions here, we are very apt to assert that the plesiosaurus and camelopard have necks too long, that the turnspit has legs too short, and the elephant a body too ponderous.

But the painfulness arising from the idea of this being the case is occasioned partly by our sympathy with the animal, partly by our false apprehension of incompletion in the Divine work,* nor in either case has it any connection with impressions of that typical beauty of which we are at present speaking; though some, perhaps, with that vital beauty which will hereafter come under discussion.

---

* For the just and severe reproof of which, compare Sir Charles Bell, (on the hand,) pp. 31, 32.

§ 17. Summary.

I wish therefore the reader to hold, respecting proportion generally, First, That apparent proportion, or the melodious connection of quantities, is a cause of unity, and therefore one of the sources of all beautiful form. Secondly, That constructive proportion is agreeable to the mind when it is known or supposed, and that its seeming absence is painful in a like degree, but that this pleasure and pain have nothing in common with those dependent on ideas of beauty.

Farther illustrations of the value of unity I shall reserve for our detailed examination, as the bringing them forward here would interfere with the general idea of the subject-matter of the theoretic faculty which I wish succinctly to convey.

CHAPTER VII.

OF REPOSE, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE PERMANENCE.

§ 1. Universal feeling respecting the necessity of repose in art. Its sources.

There is probably no necessity more imperatively felt by the artist, no test more unfailing of the greatness of artistical treatment, than that of the appearance of repose, and yet there is no quality whose semblance in mere matter is more difficult to define or illustrate. Nevertheless, I believe that our instinctive love of it, as well as the cause to which I attribute that love, (although here also, as in the former cases, I contend not for the interpretation, but for the fact,) will be readily allowed by the reader. As opposed to passion, changefulness, or laborious exertion, repose is the especial and separating characteristic of the eternal mind and power; it is the "I am" of the Creator opposed to the "I become" of all creatures; it is the sign alike of the supreme knowledge which is incapable of surprise, the supreme power which is incapable of labor, the supreme volition which is incapable of change; it is the stillness of the beams of the eternal chambers laid upon the variable waters of ministering creatures; and as we saw before that the infinity which was a type of the Divine nature on the one hand, became yet more desirable on the other from its peculiar address to our prison hopes, and to the expectations of an unsatisfied and unaccomplished existence, so the types of this third attribute of the Deity might seem to have been rendered farther attractive to mortal instinct, through the infliction upon the fallen creature of a curse necessitating a labor once unnatural and still most painful, so that the desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual nor unworthy one, but a longing for renovation and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence shall have become possible through perfection. Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed essential expression of Christian hope, is accompanied by the promise of rest;* and the death bequest of Christ to men is peace.

§ 2. Repose, how expressed in matter.

Repose, as it is expressed in material things, is either a simple appearance of permanence and quietness, as in the massy forms of a mountain or rock, accompanied by the lulling effect of all mighty sight and sound, which all feel and none define, (it would be less sacred if more explicable,) *ἕυδουσιν δὶορέων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες*, or else it is repose proper, the rest of things in which there is vitality or capability of motion actual or imagined; and with respect to these the expression of repose is greater in proportion to the amount and sublimity of the action which is not taking place, as well as to the intensity of the negation of it. Thus we speak not of repose in a stone, because the motion of a stone has nothing in it of energy nor vitality, neither its repose of stability. But having once seen a great rock come down a mountain side, we have a noble sensation of its rest, now bedded immovably among the under fern, because the power and fearfulness of its motion were great, and its stability and negation of motion are now great in proportion. Hence the imagination, which delights in nothing more than the enhancing of the characters of repose, effects this usually by either attributing to things visibly energetic an ideal stability, or to things visibly stable an ideal activity or vitality. Hence Wordsworth, of the cloud, which in itself having too much of changefulness for his purpose, is spoken of as one "that heareth not the loud winds when they call, and moveth altogether, if it move at all." And again of children, which, that it may remove from them the child restlessness, the imagination conceives as rooted flowers "Beneath an old gray oak, as violets, lie." On the other hand, the scattered rocks, which have not, as such, vitality enough for rest, are gifted with it by the living image: they "lie couched around us like a flock of sheep."

---

* Matt. xi. 28.

§ 3. The necessity to repose of an implied energy.

Thus, as we saw that unity demanded for its expression what at first might have seemed its contrary (variety) so repose demands for its expression the implied capability of its opposite, energy, and this even in its lower manifestations, in rocks and stones and trees. By comparing the modes in which the mind is disposed to regard the boughs of a fair and vigorous tree, motionless in the summer air, with the effect produced by one of these same boughs hewn square and used for threshold or lintel, the reader will at once perceive the connection of vitality with repose, and the part they both bear in beauty.

§ 4. Mental repose, how noble.

But that which in lifeless things ennobles them by seeming to indicate life, ennobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality; and raising the life of sense into the life of faith—faith, whether we receive it in the sense of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test as the shield of the true being and life of man, or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God; in which form it has been exhibited under the Christian dispensation. For whether in one or other form, whether the faithfulness of men whose path is chosen and portion fixed, in the following and receiving of that path and portion, as in the Thermopylæ camp; or the happier faithfulness of children in the good giving of their Father, and of subjects in the conduct of their king, as in the "Stand still and see the salvation of God" of the Red Sea shore, there is rest and peacefulness, the "standing still" in both, the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient: beautiful, even when based only as of old, on the self-command and self-possession, the persistent dignity or the uncalculating love of the creature,* but more beautiful yet when the rest is one of humility instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.

§ 5. Its universal value as a test of art.

Hence I think that there is no desire more intense or more exalted than that which exists in all rightly disciplined minds for the evidences of repose in external signs, and what I cautiously said respecting infinity, I say fearlessly respecting repose, that no work of art can be great without it, and that all art is great in proportion to the appearance of it. It is the most unfailing test of beauty, whether of matter or of motion; nothing can be ignoble that possesses it, nothing right that has it not, and in strict proportion to its appearance in the work is the majesty of mind to be inferred in the artificer. Without regard to other qualities, we may look to this for our evidence, and by the search for this alone we may be led to the rejection of all that is base, and the accepting of all that is good and great, for the paths of wisdom are all peace. We shall see by this light three colossal images standing up side by side, looming in their great rest of spirituality above the whole world horizon, Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Dante; and then, separated from their great religious thrones only by less fulness and earnestness of Faith, Homer, and Shakspeare; and from these we may go down step by step among the mighty men of every age, securely and certainly observant of diminished lustre in every appearance of restlessness and effort, until the last trace of true inspiration vanishes in the tottering affectations or the tortured insanities of modern times. There is no art, no pursuit, whatsoever, but its results may be classed by this test alone; everything of evil is betrayed and winnowed away by it, glitter and confusion and glare of color, inconsistency or absence of thought, forced expression, evil choice of subject, over accumulation of materials, whether in painting or literature, the shallow and unreflecting nothingness of the English schools of art, the strained and disgusting horrors of the French, the distorted feverishness of the German:—pretence, over decoration, over division of parts in architecture, and again in music, in acting, in dancing, in whatsoever art, great or mean, there are yet degrees of greatness or meanness entirely dependent on this single quality of repose.

---

* "The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity
Inward and outward, humble, yet sublime.
The life where hope and memory are as one.
Earth quiet and unchanged; the human soul
Consistent in self rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation, in that quietness."

WORDSWORTH. Excursion, Book iii.

But compare carefully (for this is put into the mouth of one diseased in thought and erring in seeking) the opening of the ninth book; and observe the difference between the mildew of inaction,—the slumber of Death; and the Patience of the Saints—the Rest of the Sabbath Eternal. (Rev. xiv. 13.)

Compare also, Chap. I. § 6.

§ 6. Instances in the Laocoon and Theseus.

Particular instances are at present both needless and cannot but be inadequate; needless, because I suppose that every reader, however limited his experience of art, can supply many for himself, and inadequate, because no number of them could illustrate the full extent of the influence of the expression. I believe, however, that by comparing the disgusting convulsions of the Laocoon, with the Elgin Theseus, we may obtain a general idea of the effect of the influence, as shown by its absence in one, and presence in the other, of two works which, as far as artistical merit is concerned, are in some measure parallel, not that I believe, even in this respect, the Laocoon justifiably comparable with the Theseus. I suppose that no group has exercised so pernicious an influence on art as this, a subject ill chosen, meanly conceived and unnaturally treated, recommended to imitation by subtleties of execution and accumulation of technical knowledge.*

---

* I would also have the reader compare with the meagre lines and contemptible tortures of the Laocoon, the awfulness and quietness of M. Angelo's treatment of a subject in most respects similar, (the plague of the Fiery Serpents,) but of which the choice was justified both by the place which the event holds in the typical system he had to arrange, and by the grandeur of the plague itself, in its multitudinous grasp, and its mystical salvation; sources of sublimity entirely wanting to the slaughter of the Dardan priest. It is good to see how his gigantic intellect reaches after repose, and truthfully finds it, in the falling hand of the near figure, and in the deathful decline of that whose hands are held up even in their venom coldness to the cross; and though irrelevant to our present purpose, it is well also to note how the grandeur of this treatment results, not merely from choice, but from a greater knowledge and more faithful rendering of truth. For whatever knowledge of the human frame there may be in the Laocoon, there is certainly none of the habits of serpents. The fixing of the snake's head in the side of the principal figure is as false to nature, as it is poor in composition of line. A large serpent never wants to bite, it wants to hold, it seizes therefore always where it can hold best, by the extremities, or throat, it seizes once and forever, and that before it coils, following up the seizure with the twist of its body round the victim, as invisibly swift as the twist of a whip lash round any hard object it may strike, and then it holds fast, never moving the jaws or the body, if its prey has any power of struggling left, it throws round another coil, without quitting the hold with the jaws; if Laocoon had had to do with real serpents, instead of pieces of tape with beads to them, he would have been held still, and not allowed to throw his arms or legs about. It is most instructive to observe the accuracy of Michael Angelo in the rendering of these circumstances; the binding of the arms to the body, and the knotting of the whole mass of agony together, until we hear the crashing of the bones beneath the grisly sliding of the engine folds. Note also the expression in all the figures of another circumstance, the torpor and cold numbness of the limbs induced by the serpent venom, which, though justifiably overlooked by the sculptor of the Laocoon, as well as by Virgil—in consideration of the rapidity of the death by crushing, adds infinitely to the power of the Florentine's conception, and would have been better hinted by Virgil, than that sickening distribution of venom on the garlands. In fact, Virgil has missed both of truth and impressiveness every way—the "morsu depascitur" is unnatural butchery—the "perfusus veneno" gratuitous

In Christian art, it would be well to compare the feeling of the finer among the altar tombs of the middle ages, with any monumental works after Michael Angelo, perhaps more especially with works of Roubilliac or Canova.

§ 7. And in altar tombs.

In the Cathedral of Lucca, near the entrance door of the north transept, there is a monument of Jacopo della Quercia's to Ilaria di Caretto, the wife of Paolo Guinigi. I name it not as more beautiful or perfect than other examples of the same period, but as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier monumental effigies, and the morbid imitation of life, sleep, or death, of which the fashion has taken place in modern times.* She is lying on a simple couch, with a hound at her

---

foulness—the "clamores horrendos," impossible degradation; compare carefully the remarks on this statue in Sir Charles Bell's Essay on Expression, (third edition, p. 192) where he has most wisely and uncontrovertibly deprived the statue of all claim to expression of energy and fortitude of mind, and shown its common and coarse intent of mere bodily exertion and agony, while he has confirmed Payne Knight's just condemnation of the passage in Virgil.

If the reader wishes to see the opposite or imaginative view of the subject, let him compare Winkelmann; and Schiller, Letters on Æsthetic Culture.

* Whenever, in monumental work, the sculptor reaches a deceptive appearance of life or death, or of concomitant details, he has gone too far. The statue should be felt for such, not look like a dead or sleeping body; it should not convey the impression of a corpse, nor of sick and outwearied flesh, but it should be the marble *image* of death or weariness. So the concomitants should be distinctly marble, severe and monumental in their lines, not shroud, not bedclothes, not actual armor nor brocade, not a real soft pillow, not a downright hard stuffed mattress, but the mere type and suggestion of these: a certain rudeness and incompletion of finish is very noble in all. Not that they are to be unnatural, such lines as are given should be pure and true, and clear of the hardness and mannered rigidity of the strictly Gothic types, but lines so few and grand as to appeal to the imagination only, and always to stop short of realization. There is a monument put up lately by a modern Italian sculptor in one of the side chapels of Santa Croce, the face fine and the execution dexterous. But it looks as if the person had been restless all night, and the artist admitted to a faithful study of the disturbed bedclothes in the morning.

feet, not on the side, but with the head laid straight and simply on the hard pillow, in which, let it be observed, there is no effort at deceptive imitation of pressure. It is understood as a pillow, but not mistaken for one. The hair is bound in a flat braid over the fair brow, the sweet and arched eyes are closed, the tenderness of the loving lips is set and quiet, there is that about them which forbids breath, something which is not death nor sleep, but the pure image of both. The hands are not lifted in prayer, neither folded, but the arms are laid at length upon the body, and the hands cross as they fall. The feet are hidden by the drapery, and the forms of the limbs concealed, but not their tenderness.

If any of us, after staying for a time beside this tomb, could see through his tears, one of the vain and unkind encumbrances of the grave, which, in these hollow and heartless days, feigned sorrow builds to foolish pride, he would, I believe, receive such a lesson of love as no coldness could refuse, no fatuity forget, and no insolence disobey.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF SYMMETRY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE JUSTICE.

§ 1. Symmetry, what and how found in organic nature.

We shall not be long detained by the consideration of this, the fourth constituent of beauty, as its nature is universally felt and understood. In all perfectly beautiful objects, there is found the opposition of one part to another and a reciprocal balance obtained; in animals the balance being commonly between opposite sides, (note the disagreeableness occasioned by the exception in flat fish, having the eyes on one side of the head,) but in vegetables the opposition is less distinct, as in the boughs on opposite sides of trees, and the leaves and sprays on each side of the boughs, and in dead matter less perfect still, often amounting only to a certain tendency towards a balance, as in the opposite sides of valleys and alternate windings of streams. In things in which perfect symmetry is from their nature impossible or improper, a balance must be at least in some measure expressed before they can be beheld with pleasure. Hence the necessity of what artists require as opposing lines or masses in composition, the propriety of which, as well as their value, depends chiefly on their inartificial and natural invention. Absolute equality is not required, still less absolute similarity. A mass of subdued color may be balanced by a point of a powerful one, and a long and latent line overpowered by a short and conspicuous one. The only error against which it is necessary to guard the reader with respect to symmetry, is the confounding it with proportion, though it seems strange that the two terms could ever have been used as synonymous. Symmetry is the *opposition* of *equal* quantities to each other. Proportion the *connection* of *unequal* quantities with each other. The property of a tree in sending out equal boughs on opposite sides is symmetrical. Its sending out shorter and smaller towards the top, proportional. In the human face its balance of opposite sides is symmetry, its division upwards, proportion.

§ 2. How necessary in art.

Whether the agreeableness of symmetry be in any way referable to its expression of the Aristotelian ἰσότης, that is to say of abstract justice, I leave the reader to determine; I only assert respecting it, that it is necessary to the dignity of every form, and that by the removal of it we shall render the other elements of beauty comparatively ineffectual: though, on the other hand, it is to be observed that it is rather a mode of arrangement of qualities than a quality itself; and hence symmetry has little power over the mind, unless all the other constituents of beauty be found together with it. A form may be symmetrical and ugly, as many Elizabethan ornaments, and yet not so ugly as it had been if unsymmetrical, but bettered always by increasing degrees of symmetry; as in star figures, wherein there is a circular symmetry of many like members, whence their frequent use for the plan and ground of ornamental designs; so also it is observable that foliage in which the leaves are concentrically grouped, as in the chestnuts,

§ 3. To what its agreeableness is referable. Various instances.

and many shrubs—rhododendrons for instance—(whence the perfect beauty of the Alpine rose)—is far nobler in its effect than any other, so that the sweet chestnut of all trees most fondly and frequently occurs in the landscape of Tintoret and Titian, beside which all other landscape grandeur vanishes: and even in the meanest things the rule holds, as in the kaleidoscope, wherein agreeableness is given to forms altogether accidental merely by their repetition and reciprocal opposition; which orderly balance and arrangement are essential to the perfect operation of the more earnest and solemn qualities of the beautiful, as being heavenly in their nature, and contrary to the violence and disorganization of sin, so that the seeking of them and submission to them is always marked in minds that have been subjected to high moral discipline, constant in all the great religious painters, to the degree of being an offence and a scorn to men of less tuned and tranquil feeling. Equal ranks of saints are placed on each side of the picture, if there be a kneeling figure on one side, there is a corresponding one on the other, the attendant angels beneath and above are arranged in like order. The Raffaelle at Blenheim, the Madonna di St. Sisto, the St. Cicilia, and all the works of Perugino, Francia, and John Bellini present some such form, and the balance at least is preserved even in pictures of action necessitating variety of grouping, as always by Giotto; and by Ghirlandajo in the introduction of his chorus-like side figures, and by Tintoret most eminently in his noblest work, the Crucifixion, where not only the grouping but the arrangement of light is absolutely symmetrical. Where there is no symmetry, the effects of passion and violence are increased, and many very sublime pictures derive their sublimity from the want of it, but they lose proportionally in the diviner quality of beauty. In landscape the same sense of symmetry is preserved, as we shall presently see, even to artificialness, by the greatest men, and it is one of the principal sources of deficient feeling in the landscapes of the present day, that the symmetry of nature is sacrificed to irregular picturesqueness. Of this, however, hereafter.

§ 4. Especially in religious art.

CHAPTER IX.

OF PURITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE ENERGY.

It may at first appear strange that I have not in my enumeration of the types of Divine attributes, included that which is certainly the most visible and evident of all, as well as the most distinctly expressed in Scripture; God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But I could not logically class the presence of an actual substance or motion with mere conditions and modes of being, neither could I logically separate from any of these, that which is evidently necessary to the perception of all. And it is also to be observed, that though the love of light is more instinctive in the human heart than any other of the desires connected with beauty, we can hardly separate its agreeableness in its own nature from the sense of its necessity and value for the purposes of life, neither the abstract painfulness of darkness from the sense of danger and incapacity connected with it; and note also that it is not *all* light, but light possessing the universal qualities of beauty, diffused or infinite rather than in points, tranquil, not startling and variable, pure, not sullied or oppressed, which is indeed pleasant and perfectly typical of the Divine nature.

§ 1. The influence of light as a sacred symbol.

Observe, however, that there is one quality, the idea of which had been just introduced in connection with light, which might have escaped us in the consideration of mere matter, namely purity, and yet I think that the original notion of this quality is altogether material, and has only been attributed to color when such color is suggestive of the condition of matter from which we originally received the idea. For I see not in the abstract how one color should be considered purer than another, except as more or less compounded, whereas there is certainly a sense of purity or impurity in the most compound and neutral colors, as well as in the simplest, a quality diffi-

§ 2. The idea of purity connected with it.

cult to define, and which the reader will probably be surprised by my calling the type of energy, with which it has certainly little traceable connection in the mind.

§ 3. Originally derived from conditions of matter.

§ 4. Associated ideas adding to the power of the impression. Influence of clearness.

I believe, however, if we carefully analyze the nature of our ideas of impurity in general, we shall find them refer especially to conditions of matter in which its various elements are placed in a relation incapable of healthy or proper operation; and most distinctly to conditions in which the negation of vital or energetic action is most evident, as in corruption and decay of all kinds, wherein particles which once, by their operation on each other, produced a living and energetic whole, are reduced to a condition of perfect passiveness, in which they are seized upon and appropriated, one by one, piecemeal, by whatever has need of them, without any power of resistance or energy of their own. And thus there is a peculiar painfulness attached to any associations of inorganic with organic matter, such as appear to involve the inactivity and feebleness of the latter, so that things which are not felt to be foul in their own nature, yet become so in association with things of greater inherent energy; as dust or earth, which in a mass excites no painful sensation, excites a most disagreeable one when strewing or staining an animal's skin, because it implies a decline and deadening of the vital and healthy power of the skin. But all reasoning about this impression is rendered difficult, by the host of associated ideas connected with it; for the ocular sense of impurity connected with corruption is infinitely enhanced by the offending of other senses and by the grief and horror of it in its own nature, as the special punishment and evidence of sin, and on the other hand, the ocular delight in purity is mingled, as I before observed, with the love of the mere element of light, as a type of wisdom and of truth; whence it seems to me that we admire the transparency of bodies, though probably it is still rather owing to our sense of more perfect order and arrangement of particles, and not to our love of light, that we look upon a piece of rock crystal as purer than a piece of marble, and on the marble as purer than a piece of chalk. And let it be observed also that the most lovely objects in nature are only partially transparent. I suppose the utmost possible sense of beauty is conveyed by a feebly translucent, smooth, but not lustrous surface of white, and pale warm red, subdued by the most pure and delicate grays, as in the finer portions of the human frame; in wreaths of snow, and in white plumage under rose light,* so Viola of Olivia in Twelfth Night, and Homer of Atrides wounded.† And I think that transparency and lustre, both beautiful in themselves, are incompatible with the highest beauty because they destroy form, on the full perception of which more of the divinely character of the object depends than upon its color. Hence, in the beauty of snow and of flesh, so much translucency is allowed as is consistent with

§ 5. Perfect beauty of surface, in what consisting.

---

* The reader will observe that I am speaking at present of mere material qualities. If he would obtain perfect ideas respecting loveliness of luminous surface, let him closely observe a swan with its wings expanded in full light five minutes before sunset. The human cheek or the rose leaf are perhaps hardly so pure, and the forms of snow, though individually as beautiful, are less exquisitely combined.

† ὥς δ' ὅτε τίς τ' ἐλεφαντα γυνή φοίνικι μιήνῃ
Μηονὶς.

So Spenser of Shamefacedness, an exquisite piece of glowing color—and sweetly of Belphoebe—(so the roses and lilies of all poets.) Compare the making of the image of Florimell.

"The substance whereof she the body made
Was purest snow, in massy mould congealed,
Which she had gathered in a shady glade
Of the Riphoean hills.
The same she tempered with fine mercury,
And mingled them with perfect vermily."

With Una he perhaps overdoes the white a little. She is two degrees of comparison above snow. Compare his questioning in the Hymn to Beauty, about that mixture made of colors fair; and goodly temperament, of pure complexion.

"Hath white and red in it such wondrous power
That it can pierce through the eyes into the heart?"

Where the distinction between typical and vital beauty is very gloriously carried out.

the full explanation of the forms, while we are suffered to receive more intense impressions of light and transparency from other objects which, nevertheless, owing to their necessarily unperceived form, are not perfectly nor affectingly beautiful. A fair forehead outshines its diamond diadem. The sparkle of the cascade withdraws not our eyes from the snowy summits in their evening silence.

§ 6. Purity only metaphorically a type of sinlessness.

It may seem strange to many readers that I have not spoken of purity in that sense in which it is most frequently used, as a type of sinlessness. I do not deny that the frequent metaphorical use of it in Scripture may have and ought to have much influence on the sympathies with which we regard it, and that probably the immediate agreeableness of it to most minds arises far more from this source than from that to which I have chosen to attribute it. But, in the first place, if it be indeed in the signs of Divine and not of human attributes that beauty consists, I see not how the idea of sin can be formed with respect to the Deity, for it is an idea of a relation borne by us to Him, and not in any way to be attached to his abstract nature. And if the idea of sin is incapable of being formed with respect to Him, so also is its negative, for we cannot form an idea of negation, where we cannot form an idea of presence. If for instance one could conceive of taste or flavor in a proposition of Euclid, so also might we of insipidity, but if not of the one, then not of the other. So that, in speaking of the goodness of God, it cannot be that we mean anything more than his Love, Mercifulness, and Justice, and these attributes I have shown to be expressed by other qualities of beauty, and I cannot trace any rational connection between them and the idea of spotlessness in matter. Neither can I trace any more distinct relation between this idea, and any of the virtues which make up the righteousness of man, except perhaps those of truth and openness, of which I have already spoken as more expressed by the transparency than the mere purity of matter. So that I conceive the whole use of the terms purity, spotlessness, etc., in moral subjects, to be merely metaphorical, and that it is rather that we illustrate these virtues by the desirableness of material purity, than that we desire material purity because it is illustrative of these virtues.

I repeat, then, that the only idea which I think can be legitimately connected with purity of matter, is this of vital and energetic connection among its particles, and that the idea of foulness is essentially connected with dissolution and death. Thus the purity of the rock, contrasted with the foulness of dust or mould, is expressed by the epithet "living," very singularly given in the rock, in almost all languages; singularly I say, because life is almost the last attribute one would ascribe to stone, but for this visible energy, and connection of its particles: and so of water as opposed to stagnancy. And I do not think that, however pure a powder or dust may be, the idea of beauty is ever connected with it, for it is not the mere purity, but the *active* condition of the substance which is desired, so that as soon as it shoots into crystals, or gathers into efflorescence, a sensation of active or real purity is received which was not felt in the calcined caput mortuum.

§ 7. Energy, how expressed by purity of matter.

And again in color. I imagine that the quality of it which we term purity is dependent on the full energizing of the rays that compose it, whereof if in compound hues any are overpowered and killed by the rest, so as to be of no value nor operation, foulness is the consequence; while so long as all act together, whether side by side, or from pigments seen one through the other, so that all the coloring matter employed comes into play in the harmony desired, and none be quenched nor killed, purity results. And so in all cases I suppose that pureness is made to us desirable, because expressive of the constant presence and energizing of the Deity in matter, through which all things live and move, and have their being, and that foulness is painful as the accompaniment of disorder and decay, and always indicative of the withdrawal of Divine support. And the practical analogies of life, the invariable connection of outward foulness with mental sloth and degradation, as well as with bodily lethargy and disease, together with the con-

§ 8. And of color.

trary indications of freshness and purity belonging to every healthy and active organic frame, (singularly seen in the effort of the young leaves when first their inward energy prevails over the earth, pierces its corruption, and shakes its dust away from their own white purity of life,) all these circumstances strengthen the instinct by associations countless and irresistible. And then, finally, with the idea of purity comes that of spirituality, for the essential characteristic of matter is its inertia, whence, by adding to its purity or energy, we may in some measure spiritualize even matter itself. Thus in the descriptions of the Apocalypse it is its purity that fits it for its place in heaven ; the river of the water of life, that proceeds out of the throne of the Lamb, is clear as crystal, and the pavement of the city is pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

§ 9. Spirituality, how so expressed.

CHAPTER X.

OF MODERATION, OR THE TYPE OF GOVERNMENT BY LAW.

Of objects which, in respect of the qualities hitherto considered, appear to have equal claims to regard, we find, nevertheless, that certain are preferred to others in consequence of an attractive power, usually expressed by the terms "chasteness, refinement, or elegance," and it appears also that things which in other respects have little in them of natural beauty, and are of forms altogether simple and adapted to simple uses, are capable of much distinction and desirableness in consequence of these qualities only. It is of importance to discover the real nature of the ideas thus expressed.

---

* I have not spoken here of any of the associations connected with warmth or coolness of color, they are partly connected with vital beauty, compare Chap. xiv. § 22, 23, and partly with impressions of the sublime, the discussion of which is foreign to the present subject; purity, however, it is which gives value to both, for neither warm nor cool color, can be beautiful, if impure.

Neither have I spoken of any questions relating to melodies of color, a subject of separate science—whose general principle has been already stated in the seventh chapter respecting unity of sequence. Those qualities only are here noted which give absolute beauty, whether to separate color or to melodies of it—for all melodies are not beautiful, but only those which are expressive of certain pleasant or solemn emotions ; and the rest startling, or curious, or cheerful, or exciting, or sublime, but not beautiful, (and so in music.) And all questions relating to this grandeur, cheerfulness, or other characteristic impression of color must be considered under the head of ideas of relation.

§ 1. Meaning of the terms Chasteness and Refinement.

Something of the peculiar meaning of the words is referable to the authority of fashion and the exclusiveness of pride, owing to which that which is the mode of a particular time is submissively esteemed, and that which by its costliness or its rarity is of difficult attainment, or in any way appears to have been chosen as the best of many things, (which is the original sense of the words elegant and exquisite,) is esteemed for the witness it bears to the dignity of the chooser.

§ 2. How referable to temporary fashions.

But neither of these ideas are in any way connected with eternal beauty, neither do they at all account for that agreeableness of color and form which is especially termed chasteness, and which it would seem to be a characteristic of rightly trained mind in all things to prefer, and of common minds to reject.

There is however another character of artificial productions, to which these terms have partial reference, which it is of some importance to note, that of finish, exactness, or refinement, which are commonly desired in the works of men, owing both to their difficulty of accomplishment and consequent expression of care and power (compare Chapter on Ideas of Power, Part I. Sect. i.,) and from their greater resemblance to the working of God, whose "absolute exactness," says Hooker, "all things imitate, by tending to that which is most exquisite in every particular." And there is not a greater sign of the imperfection of general taste, than its capability of contentment with forms and things which, professing completion, are yet not exact nor complete, as in the vulgar with wax and clay and china figures, and in bad sculptors with an unfinished

§ 3. How to the perception of completion.

and clay-like modelling of surface, and curves and angles of no precision or delicacy ; and in general, in all common and unthinking persons with an imperfect rendering of that which might be pure and fine, as church-wardens are content to lose the sharp lines of stone carving under clogging obliterations of whitewash, and as the modern Italians scrape away and polish white all the sharpness and glory of the carvings on their old churches, as most miserably and pitifully on St. Mark's at Venice, and the Baptisteries of Pistoja and Pisa, and many others ; so also the delight of vulgar painters in coarse and slurred painting, merely for the sake of its coarseness,* as of Spagno-

§ 4. Finish, by great masters esteemed essential.

---

* It is to be carefully noted that when rude execution is evidently not the result of imperfect feeling and desire (as in these men above named, it is) but of thought ; either impatient, which there was necessity to note swiftly, or impetuous, which it was well to note in mighty manner, as pre-eminently and in both kinds the case with Tintoret, and often with Michael Angelo, and in lower and more degraded modes with Rubens, and generally in the sketches and first thoughts of great masters ; there is received a very noble pleasure, connected both with ideas of power (compare again Part I. Sect. ii. Chap. I.) and with certain actions of the imagination of which we shall speak presently. But this pleasure is not received from the beauty of the work, for nothing can be perfectly beautiful unless complete, but from its simplicity and sufficiency to its immediate purpose, where the purpose is not of beauty at all, as often in things rough-hewn, pre-eminently for instance in the stones of the foundations of the Pitti and Strozzi palaces, whose noble rudeness is to be opposed both to the useless polish, and the barbarous rustications of modern times, (although indeed this instance is not without exception to be received, for the majesty of these rocky buildings depends also in some measure upon the real beauty and finish of the natural curvilinear fractures, opposed to the coarseness of human chiselling,) and again, as it respects works of higher art, the pleasure of their hasty or imperfect execution is not indicative of their beauty, but of their majesty and fulness of thought and vastness of power. Shade is only beautiful when it magnifies and sets forth the forms of fair things, so negligence is only noble when it is, as Fuseli hath it, " the shadow of energy." Which that it may be, secure the substance and the shade will follow, but let the artist beware of stealing the manner of giant intellects when he has not their intention, and of assuming large modes of treatment when he has little thoughts to treat. There is large difference between indolent impatience of labor and intellectual impatience

letto, Salvator, or Murillo, opposed to the divine finish which the greatest and mightiest of men disdained not, but rather wrought out with painfulness and life spending; as Leonardo and Michael Angelo, (for the latter, however many things he left unfinished, did finish, if at all, with a refinement that the eye cannot follow, but the feeling only, as in the Pieta of Genoa,) and Perugino always, even to the gilding of single hairs among his angel tresses, and the young Raffaelle, when he was heaven taught, and Angelico, and Pinturicchio, and John Bellini, and all other such serious and loving men. Only it is to be observed that this finish is not a part or constituent of beauty, but the full and ultimate rendering of it, so that it is an idea only connected with the works of men, for all the works of the Deity are finished with the same, that is, infinite care and completion: and so what degrees of beauty exist among them can in no way be dependent upon this source, inasmuch as there are between them no degrees of care. And therefore, as there certainly is admitted a difference of degree in what we call chasteness, even in Divine work, (compare the hollyhock or the sunflower with the vale lily,) we must seek for it some other explanation and source than this.

§ 5. Moderation, its nature and value.

And if, bringing down our ideas of it from complicated objects to simple lines and colors, we analyze and regard them carefully, I think we shall be able to trace them to an undercurrent of constantly agreeable feeling, excited by the appearance in material things of a self-restrained liberty, that is to say, by the image of that acting of God with regard to all his creation, where-

---

of delay, large difference between leaving things unfinished because we have more to do, or because we are satisfied with what we have done. Tintoret, who prayed hard, and hardly obtained, that he might be permitted, the charge of his colors only being borne, to paint a new built house from base to battlement, was not one to shun labor, it is the pouring in upon him of glorious thoughts in inexpressible multitude that his sweeping hand follows so fast. It is as easy to know the slightness of earnest haste from the slightness of blunt feeling, indolence, or affectation, as it is to know the dust of a race, from the dust of dissolution.

in, though free to operate in whatever arbitrary, sudden, violent, or inconstant ways he will, he yet, if we may reverently so speak, restrains in himself this his omnipotent liberty, and works always in consistent modes, called by us laws. And this restraint or moderation, according to the words of Hooker, ("that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term a law,") is in the Deity not restraint, such as it is said of creatures, but, as again says Hooker, "the very being of God is a law to his working," so that every appearance of painfulness or want of power and freedom in material things is wrong and ugly; for the right restraint, the image of Divine operation, is both in them, and in men, a willing and not painful stopping short of the utmost degree to which their power might reach, and the appearance of fettering or confinement is the cause of ugliness in the one, as the slightest painfulness or effort in restraint is a sign of sin in the other.

§ 6. It is the girdle of beauty.

I have put this attribute of beauty last, because I consider it the girdle and safeguard of all the rest, and in this respect the most essential of all, for it is possible that a certain degree of beauty may be attained even in the absence of one of its other constituents, as sometimes in some measure without symmetry or without unity. But the least appearance of violence or extravagance, of the want of moderation and restraint, is, I think, destructive of all beauty whatsoever in everything, color, form, motion, language, or thought, giving rise to that which in color we call glaring, in form inelegant, in motion ungraceful, in language coarse, in thought undisciplined, in all unchastened; which qualities are in everything most painful, because the signs of disobedient and irregular operation.

§ 7. How found in natural curves and colors.

And herein we at last find the reason of that which has been so often noted respecting the subtilty and almost invisibility of natural curves and colors, and why it is that we look on those lines as least beautiful which fall into wide and far license of curvature, and as most beautiful which approach nearest (so that the curvilinear character be distinctly asserted) to the government of the right line, as in the pure and severe curves of the draperies of the religious painters; and thus in color it is not red, but rose-color which is most beautiful, neither such actual green as we find in summer foliage partly, and in our painting of it constantly; but such gray green as that into which nature modifies her distant tints, or such pale green and uncertain as we see in sunset sky, and in the clefts of the glacier and the chrysoprase, and the sea-foam; and so of all colors, not that they may not sometimes be deep and full, but that there is a solemn moderation even in their very fulness, and a holy reference beyond and out of their own nature to great harmonies by which they are governed, and in obedience to which is their glory. Whereof the ignorance is shown in all evil colorists by the violence and positiveness of their hues, and by dulness and discordance consequent, for the very brilliancy and real power of all color is dependent on the chastening of it, as of a voice on its gentleness, and as of action on its calmness, and as all moral vigor on self-command. And therefore as that virtue which men last, and with most difficulty attain unto, and which many attain not at all, and yet that which is essential to the conduct and almost to the being of all other virtues, since neither imagination, nor invention, nor industry, nor sensibility, nor energy, nor any other good having, is of full avail without this of self-command, whereby works truly masculine and mighty are produced, and by the signs of which they are separated from that lower host of things brilliant, magnificent and redundant, and farther yet from that of the loose, the lawless, the exaggerated, the insolent, and the profane, I would have the necessity of it foremost among all our inculcating, and the name of it largest among all our inscribing, in so far that, over the doors of every school of Art, I would have this one word, relieved out in deep letters of pure gold,—Moderation.

§ 8. How difficult of attainment, yet essential to all good.

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL INFERENCES RESPECTING TYPICAL BEAUTY.

§ 1. The subject incompletely treated, yet admitting of general conclusions.

I HAVE now enumerated, and in some measure explained those characteristics of mere matter by which I conceive it becomes agreeable to the theoretic faculty, under whatever form, dead, organized, or animated, it may present itself. It will be our task in the succeeding volume to examine, and illustrate by examples, the mode in which these characteristics appear in every division of creation, in stones, mountains, waves, clouds, and all organic bodies ; beginning with vegetables, and then taking instances in the range of animals from the mollusc to man ; examining how one animal form is nobler than another, by the more manifest presence of these attributes, and chiefly endeavoring to show how much there is of admirable and lovely, even in what is commonly despised. At present I have only to mark the conclusions at which we have as yet arrived respecting the rank of the theoretic faculty, and then to pursue the inquiry farther into the nature of vital beauty.

As I before said, I pretend not to have enumerated all the sources of material beauty, nor the analogies connected with them ; it is probable that others may occur to many readers, or to myself as I proceed into more particular inquiry, but I am not careful to collect all conceivable evidence on the subject. I desire only to assert and prove some certain principles, and by means of these to show, in some measure, the inherent worthiness and glory of God's works and something of the relations they bear to each other and to us, leaving the subject to be fully pursued, as it only can be, by the ardor and affection of those whom it may interest.

§ 2. Typical beauty not created for man's sake.

The qualities above enumerated are not to be considered as stamped upon matter for our teaching or enjoyment only, but as the necessary consequence of the perfection of God's working, and the inevitable stamp of his image on what he creates. For it would be inconsistent with his Infinite perfection to work imperfectly in any place, or in any matter; wherefore we do not find that flowers and fair trees, and kindly skies, are given only where man may see them and be fed by them, but the Spirit of God works everywhere alike, where there is no eye to see, covering all lonely places with an equal glory, using the same pencil and outpouring the same splendor, in the caves of the waters where the sea-snakes swim, and in the desert where the satyrs dance, among the fir-trees of the stork, and the rocks of the conies, as among those higher creatures whom he has made capable witnesses of his working.

§ 3. But degrees of it for his sake admitted.

Nevertheless, I think that the admission of different degrees of this glory and image of himself upon creation, has the look of something meant especially for us; for although, in pursuance of the appointed system of government by universal laws, these same degrees exist where we cannot witness them, yet the existence of degrees at all seems at first unlikely in Divine work, and I cannot see reason for it unless that palpable one of increasing in us the understanding of the sacred characters by showing us the results of their comparative absence. For I know not that if all things had been equally beautiful, we could have received the idea of beauty at all, or if we had, certainly it had become a matter of indifference to us, and of little thought, whereas through the beneficent ordaining of degrees in its manifestation, the hearts of men are stirred by its occasional occurrence in its noblest form, and all their energies are awakened in the pursuit of it, and endeavor to arrest it or recreate it for themselves.

§ 4. What encouragement hence to be received.

But whatever doubt there may be respecting the exact amount of modification of created things admitted with reference to us, there can be none respecting the dignity of that faculty by which we receive the mysterious evidence of their divine origin. The fact of our deriving constant pleasure from whatever is a type or semblance of Divine attributes, and from nothing but that which is so, is the most glorious of all that can be demonstrated of human nature; it not only sets a great gulf of specific separation between us and the lower animals, but it seems a promise of a communion ultimately deep, close, and conscious, with the Being whose darkened manifestations we here feebly and unthinkingly delight in. Probably to every order of intelligence more of his image becomes palpable in all around them, and the glorified spirits and the angels have perceptions as much more full and rapturous than ours, as ours than those of beasts and creeping things. And receiving it, as we must, for an universal axiom that "no natural desire can be entirely frustrate," and seeing that these desires are indeed so unfailing in us that they have escaped not the reasoners of any time, but were held divine of old, and in even heathen countries, * it cannot be but that there is in these visionary pleasures, lightly as we now regard them, cause for thankfulness, ground for hope, anchor for faith, more than in all the other manifold gifts and guidances, wherewith God crowns the years, and hedges the paths of men.

CHAPTER XII.

OF VITAL BEAUTY. FIRST, AS RELATIVE.

§ 1. Transition from typical to vital Beauty.

I PROCEED more particularly to examine the nature of that second kind of beauty of which I spoke in the third chapter, as consisting "in the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things." I have already noticed the example of very pure and high typical beauty which is to be found in the lines and gradations of unsullied snow: if, passing to the edge of a sheet of it, upon the lower Alps, early in May, we find, as we are nearly sure to find, two or three little round openings pierced in it, and through these emergent, a slender, pensive,

---

* Ἡ δὲ τελεία εὐδαιμονία θεωρητική τίς ἐστιν ἐνέργεια. * * τοῖς μὲν γὰρ θεοῖς ἅπας ὁ βίος μακάριος, τοῖς δ᾽ ἀνθρώποις, ἐφ᾽ ὅσον ὁμοίωμά τι τῆς τοιαύτης ἐνεργείας ὑπαρχει. τῶν δ᾽ ἄλλων ζῴων οὐδὲν εὐδαιμονεῖ. ἐπειδὴ οὐδαμῇ κοινωνεῖ θεωρίας.—Arist. Eth. Lib. 10th. The concluding book of the Ethics should be carefully read. It is all most valuable.

fragile flower* whose small dark, purple-fringed bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave, and partly dying of very fatigue after its hard won victory ; we shall be, or we ought to be, moved by a totally different impression of loveliness from that which we receive among the dead ice and the idle clouds. There is now uttered to us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which, however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.

Throughout the whole of the organic creation every being in a perfect state exhibits certain appearances, or evidences, of happiness, and besides is in its nature, its desires, its modes of nourishment, habitation, and death, illustrative or expressive of certain moral dispositions or principles. Now, first, in the keenness of the sympathy which we feel in the happiness, real or apparent, of all organic beings, and which, as we shall presently see, invariably prompts us, from the joy we have in it, to look upon those as most lovely which are most happy ; and secondly, in the justness of the moral sense which rightly reads the lesson they are all intended to teach, and classes them in orders of worthiness and beauty according to the rank and nature of that lesson, whether it be of warning or example, of those that wallow or of those that soar, of the fiend-hunted swine by the Gennesaret lake, or of the dove returning to its ark of rest ; in our right accepting and reading of all this, consists, I say, the ultimately perfect condition of that noble theoretic faculty, whose place in the system of our nature I have already partly vindicated with respect to typical, but which can only fully be established with respect to vital beauty.

Its first perfection, therefore, relating to vital beauty, is the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives

---

* Soldanella Alpina.

§ 2. The perfection of the theoretic faculty as concerned with vital beauty, is charity.

the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable, neither what intense enjoyment the angels may have in all that they see of things that move and live, and in the part they take in the shedding of God's kindness upon them, can we know or conceive: only in proportion as we draw near to God, and are made in measure like unto him, can we increase this our possession of charity, of which the entire essence is in God only.

Wherefore it is evident that even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and that to the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character, for he who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet and the creatures that fill those spaces in the universe which he needs not, and which live not for his uses; nay, he has seldom grace to be grateful even to those that love him and serve him, while, on the other hand, none can love God nor his human brother without loving all things which his Father loves, nor without looking upon them every one as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly. Wherefore it is good to read of that kindness and humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother; and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the Mariner of Coleridge, and yet more truly and rightly taught in the Heartleap well,

> "Never to blend our pleasure, or our pride,
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels,"

and again in the White Doe of Rylstone, with the added teaching of that gift, which we have from things beneath us, in thanks for the love they cannot equally return; that anguish of our own,

"Is tempered and allayed by sympathies,
Aloft descending and descending deep,
Even to the inferior kinds,"

so that I know not of anything more destructive of the whole theoretic faculty, not to say of the Christian character and human intellect, than those accursed sports in which man makes of himself, cat, tiger, serpent, chaetodon, and alligator in one, and gathers into one continuance of cruelty for his amusement all the devices that brutes sparingly and at intervals use against each other for their necessities.*

§ 3. Only with respect to plants, less affection than sympathy.

As we pass from those beings of whose happiness and pain we are certain to those in which it is doubtful or only seeming, as possibly in plants, (though I would fain hold, if I might, "the faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes," neither do I ever crush or gather one without some pain,) yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give; for love, I think, chiefly grows in giving, at least its essence is the desire of doing good, or giving happiness, and we cannot feel the desire of that which we cannot conceive, so that if we conceive not of a plant as capable of pleasure, we cannot desire to give it pleasure, that is, we cannot love it in the entire sense of the term.

Nevertheless, the sympathy of very lofty and sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with Shelley, of the sensitive plant, and Shakspeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita, and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils, and the celandine.

"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old,"—

---

* I would have Mr. Landseer, before he gives us any more writhing otters, or yelping packs, reflect whether that which is best worthy of contemplation in a hound be its ferocity, or in an otter its agony, or in a human being its victory, hardly achieved even with the aid of its more sagacious brutal allies over a poor little fish-catching creature, a foot long.

and so all other great poets (that is to say, great seers ;*) nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearances of such enjoyment.

For it is matter of easy demonstration, that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy ; as in a rose-bush, setting aside all considerations of gradated flushing of color and fair folding of line, which it shares with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and enjoyment in the particular individual plant itself. Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it seems *solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives, but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms which appear to be necessary to its health, the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection ; they are useless to us, except as they give us pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant, and if we see a leaf withered or shrunk or worm-eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be most painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*.

§ 4. Which is proportioned to the appearance of energy in the plants.

That the amount of pleasure we receive is in exact proportion to the appearance of vigor and sensibility in the plant, is easily proved by observing the effect of those which show the evidences of it in the least degree, as, for instance, any of the cacti not in flower. Their masses are heavy and simple, their growth slow, their various parts jointed on one to another, as if they were buckled or pinned together instead of growing out of each other, (note the singular imposition in many of them, the prickly pear for instance, of the fruit upon the body of the plant, so that it looks like a swelling or disease,) and often farther opposed by harsh truncation of line as in the cactus truncatophylla. All these circumstances so concur to deprive the plant of vital evidences, that we receive from it more sense of pain than of beauty ; and yet even here, the sharpness of the angles, the symmetrical order and strength of the spines, the fresh and even color of the body, are looked for earnestly as signs of healthy condition, our pain is increased by their absence, and indefinitely increased if blotches, and other appearances of bruise and decay interfere with that little life which the plant seems to possess.

---

* Compare Milton.

"They at her coming sprung
And touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew."

The same singular characters belong in animals to the crustacea, as to the lobster, crab, scorpion, etc., and in great measure deprive them of the beauty which we find in higher orders, so that we are reduced to look for their beauty to single parts and joints, and not to the whole animal.

§ 5. This sympathy is unselfish, and does not regard utility.

Now I wish particularly to impress upon the reader that all these sensations of beauty in the plant arise from our unselfish sympathy with its happiness, and not from any view of the qualities in it which may bring good to us, nor even from our acknowledgment in it of any moral condition beyond that of mere felicity : for such an acknowledgment, belongs to the second operation of the theoretic faculty (compare § 2,) and not to the sympathetic part which we are at present examining ; so that we even find that in this respect, the moment we begin to look upon any creature as subordinate to some purpose out of itself, some of the sense of organic beauty is lost. Thus, when we are told that the leaves of a plant are occupied in decomposing carbonic acid, and preparing oxygen for us, we begin to look upon it with some such indifference as upon a gasometer. It has become a machine ; some of our sense of its happiness is gone; its emanation of inherent life is no longer pure. The bending trunk, waving to and fro in the wind above the waterfall, is beautiful because it is happy, though it is perfectly useless to us. The same trunk, hewn down and thrown across the stream, has lost its beauty. It serves as a bridge,—it has become useful; it lives not for itself, and its beauty is gone, or what it retains is purely typical, dependent on its lines and colors, not on its functions. Saw it into planks, and though now adapted to become permanently useful, its whole beauty is lost forever, or to be regained only in part when decay and ruin shall have withdrawn it again from use, and left it to receive from the hand of nature the velvet moss and varied lichen, which may again suggest ideas of inherent happiness, and tint its mouldering sides with hues of life.

There is something, I think, peculiarly beautiful and instructive in this unselfishness of the theoretic faculty, and in its abhorrence of all utility which is based on the pain or destruction of any creature, for in such ministering to each other as is consistent with the essence and energy of both, it takes delight, as in the clothing of the rock by the herbage, and the feeding of the herbage by the stream.

§ 6. Especially with respect to animals.

But still more distinct evidence of its being indeed the expression of happiness to which we look for our first pleasure in organic form, is to be found in the way in which we regard the bodily frame of animals: of which it is to be noted first, that there is not anything which causes so intense and tormenting a sense of ugliness as any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with the animal's ease and health; and that although in vegetables, where there is no immediate sense of pain, we are comparatively little hurt by excrescences and irregularities, but are sometimes even delighted with them, and fond of them, as children of the oak-apple, and sometimes look upon them as more interesting than the uninjured conditions, as in the gnarled and knotted trunks of trees; yet the slightest approach to anything of the kind in animal form is regarded with intense horror, merely from the sense of pain it conveys. And, in the second place, it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our ideas the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasure of the animal; the moment we reduce enjoyment to ingenuity, and volition to leverage, that instant all sense of beauty disappears. Take, for instance, the action of the limb of the ostrich, which is beautiful so long as we see it in its swift uplifting along the desert sands, and trace in the tread of it her scorn of the horse and his rider, but would infinitely lose of its impressiveness, if we could see the spring ligament playing backwards and forwards in alternate jerks over the tubercle at the hock joint. Take again the action of the dorsal fin of the shark tribe. So long as we observe the uniform energy of motion in the whole frame, the lash of the tail, bound of body, and instantaneous lowering of the dorsal, to avoid the resistance of the water as it turns, there is high sense of organic power and beauty. But when we dissect the dorsal, and find that its superior ray is supported in its position by a peg in a notch at its base, and that when the fin is to be lowered, the peg has to be taken out, and when it is raised put in again; although we are filled with wonder at the ingenuity of the mechanical contrivance, all our sense of beauty is gone, and not to be recovered until we again see the fin playing on the animal's body, apparently by its own will alone, with the life running along its rays. It is by a beautiful ordinance of the Creator that all these mechanisms are concealed from sight, though open to investigation, and that in all which is outwardly manifested we seem to see his presence rather than his workmanship, and the mysterious breath of life, rather than the manipulation of matter.

§ 7. And it is destroyed by evidences of mechanism.

As, therefore, it appears from all evidence that it is the sense of felicity which we first desire in organic form, it is evident from reason, as demonstrable by experience, that those forms will be the most beautiful (always, observe, leaving typical beauty out of the question) which exhibit most of power, and seem capable of most quick and joyous sensation. Hence we find gradations of beauty from the apparent impenetrableness of hide and slow motion of the elephant and rhinoceros, from the foul occupation of the vulture, from the earthy struggling of the worm, to the brilliancy of the butterfly, the buoyancy of the lark, the swiftness of the fawn and the horse, the fair and kingly sensibility of man.

§ 8. The second perfection of the theoretic faculty as concerned with life is justice of moral judgment.

Thus far then, the theoretic faculty is concerned with the happiness of animals, and its exercise depends on the cultivation of the affections only. Let us next observe how it is concerned with the moral functions of animals, and therefore how it is dependent on the cultivation of every moral sense. There is not any organic creature, but in its history and habits it shall exemplify or illustrate to us some moral excellence or deficiency, or some point of God's providential government, which it is necessary for us to know. Thus the functions and the fates of animals are distributed to them, with a variety which exhibits to us the dignity and results of almost every passion and kind of conduct, some filthy and slothful, pining and unhappy ; some rapacious, restless, and cruel ; some ever earnest and laborious, and, I think, unhappy in their endless labor, creatures, like the bee, that heap up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, and others employed like angels in endless offices of love and praise. Of which when, in right condition of mind, we esteem those most beautiful, whose functions are the most noble, whether as some, in mere energy, or as others, in moral honor, so that we look with hate on the foulness of the sloth, and the subtlety of the adder, and the rage of the hyena : with the honor due to their earthly wisdom we invest the earnest ant and unwearied bee ; but we look with full perception of sacred function to the tribes of burning plumage and choral voice.* And so what lesson we might receive for our earthly conduct from the creeping and laborious things, was taught us by that earthly king who made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones (yet thereafter was less rich towards God). But from the lips of an heavenly King, who had not where to lay his head, we were taught what lesson we have to learn from those higher creatures who sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns, for their Heavenly Father feedeth them.

---

* "Type of the wise—who soar, but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home."
(Wordsworth.—To the Skylark.)

§ 9. How impeded.

There is much difficulty in the way of our looking with this rightly balanced judgment on the moral functions of the animal tribes, owing to the independent and often opposing characters of typical beauty, which are among them, as it seems, arbitrarily distributed, so that the most fierce and cruel are often clothed in the liveliest colors, and strengthened by the noblest forms, with this only exception, that so far as I know, there is no high beauty in any slothful animal, but even among those of prey, its characters exist in exalted measure upon those that range and pursue, and are in equal degree withdrawn from those that lie subtly and silently in the covert of the reed and fens. But that mind only is fully disciplined in its theoretic power, which can, when it chooses, throwing off the sympathies and repugnancies with which the ideas of destructiveness or of innocence accustom us to regard the animal tribes, as well as those meaner likes and dislikes which arise, I think, from the greater or less resemblance of animal powers to our own, can pursue the pleasures of typical beauty down to the scales of the alligator, the coils of the serpent, and the joints of the beetle ; and again, on the other hand, regardless of the impressions of typical beauty, accept from each creature, great or small, the more important lessons taught by its position in creation as sufferer or chastiser, as lowly or having dominion, as of foul habit or lofty aspiration, and from the several perfections which all illustrate or possess, courage, perseverance, industry, or intelligence, or, higher yet, of love and patience, and fidelity and rejoicing, and never wearied praise. Which moral perfections that they indeed are productive, in proportion to their expression, of instant beauty instinctively felt, is best proved by comparing those parts of animals in which they are definitely expressed, as for instance the eye, of which we shall find those ugliest which

§ 10. The influence of moral signs in expression.

have in them no expression nor life whatever, but a corpse-like stare, or an indefinite meaningless glaring, as in some lights, those of owls and cats, and mostly of insects and of all creatures in which the eye seems rather an external, optical instrument than a bodily member through which emotion and virtue of soul may be expressed, (as preeminently in the chameleon,) because the seeming want of sensibility and vitality in a living creature is the most painful of all wants. And next to these in ugliness come the eyes that gain vitality indeed, but only by means of the expression of intense malignity, as in the serpent and alligator ; and next to these, to whose malignity is added the virtue of subtlety and keenness, as of the lynx and hawk ; and then, by diminishing the malignity and increasing the expressions of comprehensiveness and determination, we arrive at those of the lion and eagle, and at last, by destroying malignity altogether, at the fair eye of the herbivorous tribes, wherein the superiority of beauty consists always in the greater or less sweetness and gentleness primarily, as in the gazelle, camel, and ox, and in the greater or less intellect, secondarily, as in the horse and dog, and finally, in gentleness and intellect both in man. And again, taking the mouth, another source of expression, we find it ugliest where it has none, as mostly in fish, or perhaps where without gaining much in expression of any kind, it becomes a formidable destructive instrument, as again in the alligator, and then, by some increase of expression, we arrive at birds' beaks, wherein there is more obtained by the different ways of setting on the mandibles than is commonly supposed, (compare the bills of the duck and the eagle,) and thence we reach the finely developed lips of the carnivora, which nevertheless lose that beauty they have, in the actions of snarling and biting, and from these we pass to the nobler because gentler and more sensible, of the horse, camel, and fawn, and so again up to man, only there is less traceableness of the principle in the mouths of the lower animals, because they are in slight measure only capable of expression, and chiefly used as instruments, and that of low function, whereas in man the mouth is given most definitely as a means of expression, beyond and above its lower functions. Compare the remarks of Sir Charles Bell on this subject in his Essay on Expression, and compare the mouth of the negro head given by him (p. 28, third edition) with that of Raffaelle's St. Catherine. I shall illustrate the subject farther hereafter by giving the mouth of one of the demons of Orcagna's Inferno, with projecting incisors, and that of a fish and a swine, in opposition to pure graminivorous and human forms; but at present it is sufficient for my purpose to insist on the single great principle, that, wherever expression is possible, and uninterfered with by characters of typical beauty, which confuse the subject exceedingly as regards the mouth, (for the typical beauty of the carnivorous lips is on a grand scale, while it exists in very low degree in the beaks of birds,) wherever, I say, these considerations do not interfere, the beauty of the animal form is in exact proportion to the amount of moral or intellectual virtue expressed by it; and wherever beauty exists at all, there is some kind of virtue to which it is owing, as the majesty of the lion's eye is owing not to its ferocity, but to its seriousness and seeming intellect, and of the lion's mouth to its strength and sensibility, and not its gnashing of teeth, nor wrinkling in its wrath; and farther be it noted, that of the intellectual or moral virtues, the moral are those which are attended with most beauty, so that the gentle eye of the gazelle is fairer to look upon than the more keen glance of men, if it be unkind.

§ 11. As also in plants.

Of the parallel effects of expression upon plants there is little to be noted, as the mere naming of the subject cannot but bring countless illustrations to the mind of every reader: only this, that, as we saw they were less susceptible of our sympathetic love, owing to the absence in them of capability of enjoyment, so they are less open to the affections based upon the expression of moral virtue, owing to their want of volition; so that even on those of them which are deadly and unkind we look not without pleasure, the more because this their evil operation cannot be by them outwardly expressed, but only by us empirically known; so that of the outward seemings and expressions of plants, there are few but are in some way good and therefore beautiful, as of humility, and modesty, and love of places and things, in the reaching out of their arms, and clasping of their tendrils; and energy of resistance, and patience of suffering, and beneficence one towards another in shade and protection, and to us also in scents and fruits (for of their healing virtues, however important to us, there is no more outward sense nor seeming than of their properties mortal or dangerous).

§ 12. Recapitulation.

Whence, in fine, looking to the whole kingdom of organic nature, we find that our full receiving of its beauty depends first on the sensibility and then on the accuracy and touchstone faithfulness of the heart in its moral judgments, so that it is necessary that we should not only love all creatures well, but esteem them in that order which is according to God's laws and not according to our own human passions and predilections, not looking for swiftness, and strength, and cunning, rather than for patience and kindness, still less delighting in their animosity and cruelty one towards another, neither, if it may be avoided, interfering with the working of nature in any way, nor, when we interfere to obtain service, judging from the morbid conditions of the animal or vegetable so induced; for we see every day the theoretic faculty entirely destroyed in those who are interested in particular animals, by their delight in the results of their own teaching, and by the vain straining of curiosity for new forms such as nature never intended, as the disgusting types for instance, which we see earnestly sought for by the fanciers of rabbits and pigeons, and constantly in horses, substituting for the true and balanced beauty of the free creature some morbid development of a single power, as of swiftness in the racer, at the expense, in certain measure, of the animal's healthy constitution and fineness of form; and so the delight of horticulturists in the spoiling of plants; so that in all cases we are to beware of such opinions as seem in any way referable to human pride, or even to the grateful or pernicious influence of things upon ourselves, and to cast the mind free, and out of ourselves, humbly, and yet always in that noble position of pause above the other visible creatures, nearer God than they, which we authoritatively hold, thence looking down upon them, and testing the clearness of our moral vision by the extent, and fulness, and constancy of our pleasure in the light of God's love as it embraces them, and the harmony of his holy laws, that forever bring mercy out of rapine, and religion out of wrath.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF VITAL BEAUTY. SECONDLY, AS GENERIC.

§ 1. The beauty of fulfilment of appointed function in every animal.

Hitherto we have observed the conclusions of the theoretic faculty with respect to the relations of happiness, and of more or less exalted function existing between different orders of organic being. But we must pursue the inquiry farther yet, and observe what impressions of beauty are connected with more or less perfect fulfilment of the appointed function by different individuals of the same species. We are now no longer called to pronounce upon worthiness of occupation or dignity of disposition ; but both employment and capacity being known, and the animal's position and duty fixed, we have to regard it in that respect alone, comparing it with other individuals of its species, and to determine how far it worthily executes its office ; whether, if scorpion, it hath poison enough, or if tiger, strength enough, or if dove, innocence enough, to sustain rightly its place in creation, and come up to the perfect idea of dove, tiger, or scorpion.

In the first or sympathetic operation of the theoretic faculty, it will be remembered, we receive pleasure from the signs of mere happiness in living things. In the second theoretic operation of comparing and judging, we constituted ourselves such judges of the lower creatures as Adam was made by God when they were brought to him to be named, and we allowed of beauty in them as they reached, more or less, to that standard of moral perfection by which we test ourselves. But, in the third place, we are to come down again from the judgment seat, and taking it for granted that every creature of God is in some way good, and has a duty and specific operation providentially accessory to the well-being of all, we are to look in this faith to that employment and nature of each, and to derive pleasure from their entire perfection and fitness for the duty they have to do, and in their entire fulfilment of it : and so we are to take pleasure and find beauty in the magnificent binding together of the jaws of the ichthyosaurus for catching and holding, and in the adaptation of the lion for springing, and of the locust for destroying, and of the lark for singing, and in every creature for the doing of that which God has made it to do. Which faithful pleasure in the perception of the perfect operation of lower creatures I have placed last among the perfections of the theoretic faculty concerning them, because it is commonly last acquired, both owing to the humbleness and trustfulness of heart which it demands, and because it implies a knowledge of the habits and structure of every creature, such as we can but imperfectly possess.

§ 2. The two senses of the word "ideal." Either it refers to action of the imagination.

The perfect *idea* of the form and condition in which all the properties of the species are fully developed, is called the ideal of the species. The question of the nature of ideal conception of species, and of the mode in which the mind arrives at it, has been the subject of so much discussion, and source of so much embarrassment, chiefly owing to that unfortunate distinction between idealism and realism which leads most people to imagine the ideal opposed to the real, and therefore *false*, that I think it necessary to request the reader's most careful attention to the following positions.

Any work of art which represents, not a material object, but the mental conception of a material object, is, in the primary sense of the word ideal ; that is to say, it represents an idea, and not a thing. Any work of art which represents or realizes a material object, is, in the primary sense of the term, unideal.

Ideal works of art, therefore, in this first sense, represent the result of an act of imagination, and are good or bad in proportion to the healthy condition and general power of the imagination, whose acts they represent.

Unideal works of art (the studious production of which is termed realism) represent actual existing things, and are good or bad in proportion to the perfection of the representation.

All entirely bad works of art may be divided into those which, professing to be imaginative, bear no stamp of imagination, and are therefore false, and those which, professing to be representative of matter, miss of the representation and are therefore nugatory.

It is the habit of most observers to regard art as representative of matter, and to look only for the entireness of representation ; and it was to this view of art that I limited the arguments of the former sections of the present work, wherein having to oppose the conclusions of a criticism entirely based upon the realist system, I was compelled to meet that criticism on its own grounds. But the greater part of works of art, more especially those devoted to the expression of ideas of beauty, are the results of the agency of imagination, their worthiness depending, as above stated, on the healthy condition of the imagination.

Hence it is necessary for us, in order to arrive at conclusions respecting the worthiness of such works, to define and examine the nature of the imaginative faculty, and to determine first what are the signs or conditions of its existence at all ; and secondly, what are the evidences of its healthy and efficient existence, upon which examination I shall enter in the second section of the present part.

§ 3. Or to perfection of type.

But there is another sense of the word ideal besides this, and it is that with which we are here concerned. It is evident that, so long as we use the word to signify that art which represents ideas and not things, we may use it as truly of the art which represents an idea of Caliban, and not real Caliban, as of the art which represents an idea of Antinous, and not real Antinous. For that is as much imagination which conceives the monster as which conceives the man. If, however, Caliban and Antinous be creatures of the same species, and the form of the one contain not the fully developed types or characters of the species, while the form of the other presents the greater part of them, then the latter is said to be a form more ideal than the other, as a nearer approximation to the general idea or conception of the species.

§ 4 This last sense how inaccurate, yet to be retained.

Now it is evident that this use of the word ideal is much less accurate than the other, from which it is derived, for it rests on the assumption that the assemblage of all the characters of a species in their perfect development cannot exist but in the imagination. For if it can actually and in reality exist, it is not right to call it ideal or imaginary ; it would be better to call it characteristic or general, and to reserve the word ideal for the results of the operation of the imagination, either on the perfect or imperfect forms.

Nevertheless, the word ideal has been so long and universally accepted in this sense, that I think it better to continue the use of it, so only that the reader will be careful to observe the distinction in the sense, according to the subject matter under discussion. At present then, using it as expressive of the noble generic form which indicates the full perfection of the creature in all its functions, I wish to examine how far this perception exists or may exist in nature, and if not in nature, how it is by us discoverable or imaginable.

§ 5. Of Ideal form. First, in the lower animals.

Now it is better, when we wish to arrive at truth, always to take familiar instances, wherein the mind is not likely to be biassed by any elevated associations or favorite theories. Let us ask therefore, first, what kind of ideal form may be attributed to a limpet or an oyster, that is to say, whether all oysters do or do not come up to the entire notion or idea of an oyster. I apprehend that, although in respect of size, age, and kind of feeding, there may be some difference between them, yet of those which are of full size and healthy condition there will be found many which fulfil the conditions of an oyster in every respect, and that so perfectly, that we could not, by combining the features of two or more together, produce a more perfect oyster than any that we see. I suppose also, that, out of a number of healthy fish, birds, or beasts of the same species, it would not be easy to select an individual as superior to *all* the rest ; neither by comparing two or more of the nobler examples together, to arrive at the conception of a form superior to that of either ; but that, though the accidents of more abundant food or more fitting habitation may induce among them some varieties of size, strength, and color, yet the entire generic form would be presented by many, neither would any art be able to add to or diminish from it.

§ 6. In what consistent.

It is, therefore, hardly right to use the word ideal of the generic forms of these creatures, of which we see actual examples ; but if we are to use it, then be it distinctly understood that their ideality consists in the full development of all the powers and properties of the creature as such, and is inconsistent with accidental or imperfect developments, and even with great variation from average size, the ideal size being neither gigantic nor diminutive, but the utmost grandeur and entireness of proportion at a certain point above the mean size ; for as more individuals always fall short of generic size than rise above it, the generic is above the average or mean size. And this perfection of the creature invariably involves the utmost possible degree of all those properties of beauty, both typical and vital, which it is appointed to possess.

§ 7. Ideal form in vegetables.

Let us next observe the conditions of ideality in vegetables. Out of a large number of primroses or violets, I apprehend that, although one or two might be larger than all the rest, the greater part would be very sufficient primroses and violets. And that we could, by no study nor combination of violets, conceive of a better violet than many in the bed. And so generally of the blossoms and separate members of all vegetables.

But among the entire forms of the complex vegetables, as of oak-trees, for instance, there exists very large and constant difference, some being what we hold to be fine oaks, as in parks, and places where they are taken care of, and have their own way, and some are but poor and mean oaks, which have had no one to take care of them, but have been obliged to maintain themselves.

That which we have to determine is, whether ideality be predicable of the fine oaks only, or whether the poor and mean oaks also may be considered as ideal, that is, coming up to the conditions of oak, and the general notion of oak.

§ 8. The difference of position between plants and animals.

Now there is this difference between the positions held in creation by animals and plants, and thence in the dispositions with which we regard them; that the animals, being for the most part locomotive, are capable both of living where they choose, and of obtaining what food they want, and of fulfilling all the conditions necessary to their health and perfection. For which reason they are answerable for such health and perfection, and we should be displeased and hurt if we did not find it in one individual as well as another.

§ 9. Admits of variety in the ideal of the former.

But the case is evidently different with plants. They are intended fixedly to occupy many places comparatively unfit for them, and to fill up all the spaces where greenness, and coolness, and ornament, and oxygen are wanted, and that with very little reference to their comfort or convenience. Now it would be hard upon the plant if, after being tied to a particular spot, where it is indeed much wanted, and is a great blessing, but where it has enough to do to live, whence it cannot move to obtain what it wants or likes, but must stretch its unfortunate arms here and there for bare breath and light, and split its way among rocks, and grope for sustenance in unkindly soil; it would be hard upon the plant, I say, if under all these disadvantages, it were made answerable for its appearance, and found fault with because it was not a fine plant of the kind. And so we find it ordained that in order that no unkind comparisons may be drawn between one and another, there are not appointed to plants the fixed number, position, and proportion of members which are ordained in animals, (and any variation from which in these is unpardonable,) but a continually varying number and position, even among the more freely growing examples, admitting therefore all kinds of license to those which have enemies to contend with, and that without in any way detracting from their dignity and perfection.

So then there is in trees no perfect form which can be fixed upon or reasoned out as ideal ; but that is always an ideal oak which, however poverty-stricken, or hunger-pinched, or tempest-tortured, is yet seen to have done, under its appointed circumstances, all that could be expected of oak.

The ideal, therefore, of the park oak is that to which I alluded in the conclusion of the former part of this work, full size, united terminal curve, equal and symmetrical range of branches on each side. The ideal of the mountain oak may be anything, twisting, and leaning, and shattered, and rock-encumbered, so only that amidst all its misfortunes, it maintain the dignity of oak ; and, indeed, I look upon this kind of tree as more ideal than the other, in so far as by its efforts and struggles, more of its nature, enduring power, patience in waiting for, and ingenuity in obtaining what it wants, is brought out, and so more of the essence of oak exhibited, than under more fortunate conditions.

§ 10. Ideal form in vegetables destroyed by cultivation.

And herein, then, we at last find the cause of that fact which we have twice already noted, that the exalted or seemingly improved condition, whether of plant or animal, induced by human interference, is not the true and artistical ideal of it.* It has been well shown by Dr. Herbert,† that many plants are found alone on a certain soil or subsoil in a wild state, not because such soil is favorable to them, but because they alone are capable of existing on it, and because all dangerous rivals are by its inhospitality removed. Now if we withdraw the plant from this position, which it hardly endures, and supply it with the earth, and maintain about it the temperature that it delights in; withdrawing from it at the same time all rivals which, in such conditions nature would have thrust upon it, we shall indeed obtain a magnificently developed example of the plant, colossal in size, and splendid in organization, but we shall utterly lose in it that moral ideal which is dependent on its right fulfilment of its appointed functions. It was intended and created by the Deity for the covering of those lonely spots where no other plant could live; it has been thereto endowed with courage, and strength, and capacities of endurance unequalled; its character and glory are not therefore in the gluttonous and idle feeling of its own over luxuriance, at the expense of other creatures utterly destroyed and rooted out for its good alone, but in its right doing of its hard duty, and forward climbing into those spots of forlorn hope where it alone can bear witness to the kindness and presence of the Spirit that cutteth out rivers among the rocks, as it covers the valleys with corn: and there, in its vanward place, and only there, where nothing is withdrawn for it, nor hurt by it, and where nothing can take part of its honor, nor usurp its throne, are its strength, and fairness, and price, and goodness in the sight of God, to be truly esteemed.

---

* I speak not here of those conditions of vegetation which have especial reference to man, as of seeds and fruits, whose sweetness and farina seem in great measure given, not for the plant's sake, but for his, and to which therefore the interruption in the harmony of creation of which he was the cause is extended, and their sweetness and larger measure of good to be obtained only by his redeeming labor. His curse has fallen on the corn and the vine, and the wild barley misses of its fulness, that he may eat bread by the sweat of his brow.

† Journal of the Horticultural Society. Part I.

§ 11. Instance in the Soldanella and Ranunculus.

The first time that I saw the soldanella alpina, before spoken of, it was growing, of magnificent size, on a sunny Alpine pasture, among bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle, associated with a profusion of geum montanum, and ranunculus pyrenæus. I noticed it only because new to me, nor perceived any peculiar beauty in its cloven flower. Some days after, I found it alone, among the rack of the higher clouds, and howling of glacier winds, and, as I described it, piercing through an edge of avalanche, which in its retiring had left the new ground brown and lifeless, and as if burned by recent fire; the plant was poor and feeble, and seemingly exhausted with its efforts, but it was then that I comprehended its ideal character, and saw its noble function and order of glory among the constellations of the earth.

The ranunculus glacialis might perhaps, by cultivation, be blanched from its wan and corpse-like paleness to purer white, and won to more branched and lofty development of its ragged leaves. But the ideal of the plant is to be found only in the last, loose stones of the moraine, alone there; wet with the cold, unkindly drip of the glacier water, and trembling as the loose and steep dust to which it clings yields ever and anon, and shudders and crumbles away from about its root.

§ 12. The beauty of repose and felicity, how consistent with such ideal.

And if it be asked how this conception of the utmost beauty of ideal form is consistent with what we formerly argued respecting the pleasantness of the appearance of felicity in the creature, let it be observed, and forever held, that the right and true happiness of every creature, is in this very discharge of its function, and in those efforts by which its strength and inherent energy are developed: and that the repose of which we also spoke as necessary to all beauty, is, as was then stated, repose not of inanition, nor of luxury, nor of irresolution, but the repose of magnificent energy and being; in action, the calmness of trust and determination; in rest, the consciousness of duty accomplished and of victory won, and this repose and this felicity can take place as well in the midst of trial and tempest, as beside the waters of comfort; they perish only when the creature is either unfaithful to itself, or is afflicted by circumstances unnatural and malignant to its being, and for the contending with which it was neither fitted nor ordained. Hence that rest which is indeed glorious is of the chamois couched breathless on his granite bed, not of the stalled ox over his fodder, and that happiness which is indeed beautiful is in the bearing of those trial tests which are appointed for the proving of every creature, whether it be good, or whether it be evil; and in the fulfilment to the uttermost of every command it has received, and the out-carrying to the uttermost of every power and gift it has gotten from its God.

§ 13. The ideality of Art.

Therefore the task of the painter in his pursuit of ideal form is to attain accurate knowledge, so far as may be in his power, of the character, habits, and peculiar virtues and duties of every species of being; down even to the stone, for there is an ideality of stones according to their kind, an ideality of granite and slate and marble, and it is in the utmost and most exalted exhibition of such individual character, order, and use, that all ideality of art consists. The more cautious he is in assigning the right species of moss to its favorite trunk, and the right kind of weed to its necessary stone, in marking the definite and characteristic leaf, blossom, seed, fracture, color, and inward anatomy of everything, the more truly ideal his work becomes. All confusion of species, all careless rendering of character, all unnatural and arbitrary association, is vulgar and unideal in proportion to its degree.

§ 14. How connected with the imaginative faculties.

It is to be noted, however, that nature sometimes in a measure herself conceals these generic differences, and that when she displays them it is commonly on a scale too small for human hand to follow.

The pursuit and seizure of the generic differences in their concealment, and the display of them on a larger and more palpable scale, is one of the wholesome and healthy operations of the imagination of which we are presently to speak.*

Generic differences being commonly exhibited by art in different manner and way from that of their natural occurrence, are in this respect more strictly and truly ideal in art than in reality.

§ 15. Ideality, how belonging to ages and conditions.

This only remains to be noted, that, of all creatures whose existence involves birth, progress, and dissolution, ideality is predicable all through their existence, so that they be perfect with reference to their supposed period of being. Thus there is an ideal of infancy, of youth, of old age, of death, and of decay. But when the ideal form of the species is spoken of or conceived in general terms, the form is understood to be of that period when the generic attributes are perfectly developed, and previous to the commencement of their decline. At which period all the characters of vital and typical beauty are commonly most concentrated in them, though the arrangement and proportion of these characters varies at different periods, youth having more of the vigorous beauty, and age of the reposing; youth of typical outward fairness, and age of expanded and etherealized moral expression; the babe, again, in some measure atoning in gracefulness for its want of strength, so that the balanced glory of the creature continues in solemn interchange, perhaps even

---

* Compare Sect. II. Chap. IV.

> "Filling more and more with crystal light,
> As pensive evening deepens into night."

Hitherto, however, we have confined ourselves to the examination of ideal form in the lower animals, and we have found that, to arrive at it, no combination of forms nor exertion of fancy is required, but only simple choice among those naturally presented, together with careful investigation and anatomizing of the habits of the creatures. I fear we shall arrive at a very different conclusion, in considering the ideal form of man.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF VITAL BEAUTY. THIRDLY, IN MAN.

§ 1. Condition of the human creature entirely different from that of the lower animals.

Having thus passed gradually through all the orders and fields of creation, and traversed that goodly line of God's happy creatures who "leap not, but express a feast, where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants," without finding any deficiency which human invention might supply, nor any harm which human interference might mend, we come at last to set ourselves face to face with ourselves, expecting that in creatures made after the image of God we are to find comeliness and completion more exquisite than in the fowls of the air and the things that pass through the paths of the sea.

But behold now a sudden change from all former experience. No longer among the individuals of the race is there equality or likeness, a distributed fairness and fixed type visible in each, but evil diversity, and terrible stamp of various degradation ; features seamed with sickness, dimmed by sensuality, convulsed by passion, pinched by poverty, shadowed by sorrow, branded with remorse ; bodies consumed with sloth, broken down by labor, tortured by disease, dishonored in foul uses ; intellects without power, hearts without hope, minds earthly and devilish ; our bones full of the sin of our youth, the heaven revealing our iniquity, the earth rising up against us, the roots dried up beneath, and the branch cut off above ; well for us only, if, after beholding this our natural face in a glass, we desire not straightway to forget what manner of men we be.

§ 2. What room here for idealization.

Herein there is at last something, and too much, for that short stopping intelligence and dull perception of ours to accomplish, whether in earnest fact, or in the seeking for the outward image of beauty :—to undo the devil's work, to restore to the body the grace and the power which inherited disease has destroyed, to return to the spirit the purity, and to the intellect the grasp that they had in Paradise. Now, first of all, this work, be it observed is in no respect a work of imagination. Wrecked we are, and nearly all to pieces ; but that little good by which we are to redeem ourselves is to be got out of the old wreck, beaten about and full of sand though it be ; and not out of that desert island of pride on which the devils split first, and we after them : and so the only restoration of the body that we can reach is not to be coined out of our fancies, but to be collected out of such uninjured and bright vestiges of the old seal as we can find and set together, and so the ideal of the features, as the good and perfect soul is seen in them, is not to be reached by imagination, but by the seeing and reaching forth of the better part of the soul to that of which it must first know the sweetness and goodness in itself, before it can much desire, or rightly find, the signs of it in others.

I say much desire and rightly find, because there is not any soul so sunk but that it shall in some measure feel the impression of mental beauty in the human features, and detest in others its own likeness, and in itself despise that which of itself it has made.

Now, of the ordinary process by which the realization of ideal bodily form is reached, there is explanation enough in all treatises on art, and it is so far well comprehended that I need not stay long to consider it. So far as the sight and knowledge of the human form, of the purest race, exercised from infancy constantly, but not excessively in all exercises of dignity, not in twists and straining dexterities, but in natural exercises of running, casting, or riding ; practised in endurance, not of extraordinary hardship, for that hardens and degrades the body, but of natural hardship, vicissitudes of winter and summer, and cold and heat, yet in a climate where none of these are severe ; surrounded also by a certain degree of right luxury, so as to soften and refine the forms of strength ; so far as the sight of all this could render the mental intelligence of what is right in human form so acute as to be able to abstract and combine from the best examples so produced, that which was most perfect in each, so far the Greek conceived and attained the ideal of bodily form : and on the Greek modes of attaining it, as well as on what he produced, as a perfect example of it, chiefly dwell those writers whose opinions on this subject I have collected ; wholly losing sight of what seems to me the most important branch of the inquiry, namely, the influence for good or evil of the mind upon the bodily shape, the wreck of the mind itself, and the modes by which we may conceive of its restoration.

§ 3. How the conception of the bodily ideal is reached.

Now, the operation of the mind upon the body, and evidence of it thereon, may be considered under the following three general heads.

§ 4. Modifications of the bodily ideal owing to influence of mind. First, of intellect.

First, the operation of the intellectual powers upon the features, in the fine cutting and chiselling of them, and removal from them of signs of sensuality and sloth, by which they are blunted and deadened, and substitution of energy and intensity for vacancy and insipidity, (by which wants alone the faces of many fair women are utterly spoiled and rendered valueless,) and by the keenness given to the eye and fine moulding and development to the brow, of which effects Sir Charles Bell has well noted the desirableness and opposition to brutal types, (p. 59, third edition ;) only this he has not sufficiently observed, that there are certain virtues of the intellect in measure inconsistent with each other, as perhaps great subtlety with great comprehensiveness, and high analytical with high imaginative power, or that at least, if consistent and compatible, their signs upon the features are not the same, so that the outward form cannot express both, without in a measure expressing neither ; and so there are certain separate virtues of the outward form correspondent with the more constant employment or more prevailing capacity of the brain, as the piercing keenness, or open and reflective comprehensiveness of the eye and forehead, and that all these virtues of form are ideal, only those the most so which are the signs of the worthiest powers of intellect, though which these be, we will not at present stay to inquire.

§ 5. Secondly, of the moral feelings.

The second point to be considered in the influence of mind upon body, is the mode of operation and conjunction of the moral feelings on and with the intellectual powers, and then their conjoint influence on the bodily form. Now, the operation of the right moral feelings on the intellect is always for the good of the latter, for it is not possible that selfishness should reason rightly in any respect, but must be blind in its estimation of the worthiness of all things, neither anger, for that overpowers the reason or outcries it, neither sensuality, for that overgrows and chokes it, neither agitation, for that has no time to compare things together, neither enmity, for that must be unjust, neither fear, for that exaggerates all things, neither cunning and deceit, for that which is voluntarily untrue will soon be unwittingly so : but the great reasoners are self-command, and trust unagitated, and deep-looking Love, and Faith, which as she is above Reason, so she best holds the reins of it from her high seat : so that they err grossly who think of the right development even of the intellectual type as possible, unless we look to higher sources of beauty first. Nevertheless, though in their operation *upon* them the moral feelings are thus elevatory of the mental faculties, yet in their conjunction *with* them they seem to occupy, in their own fulness, such room as to absorb and overshadow all else, so that the simultaneous exercise of both is in a sort impossible ; for which cause we occasionally find the moral part in full development and action, without corresponding expanding of the intellect (though never without healthy condition of it,) as in that of Wordsworth,

> "In such high hour
> Of visitation from the Living God,
> Thought was not ;"

only I think that if we look far enough, we shall find that it is not intelligence itself, but the immediate act and effort of a laborious, struggling, and imperfect intellectual faculty, with which high moral emotion is inconsistent ; and that though we cannot, while we feel deeply, reason shrewdly, yet I doubt if, *except* when we feel deeply, we can ever comprehend fully ; so that it is only the climbing and mole-like piercing, and not the sitting upon their central throne, nor emergence into light, of the intellectual faculties which the full heart feeling allows not. Hence, therefore, in the indications of the countenance, they are only the hard cut lines, and rigid settings, and wasted hollows, that speak of past effort and painfulness of mental application, which are inconsistent with expression of moral feeling, for all these are of infelicitous augury ; but not the full and serene development of habitual command in the look, and solemn thought in the brow, only these, in their unison with the signs of emotion, become softened and gradually confounded with a serenity and authority of nobler origin. But of the sweetness which that higher serenity (of happiness,) and the dignity which that higher

§ 6. What beauty is bestowed by them.

authority (of Divine law, and not human reason,) can and must stamp on the features, it would be futile to speak here at length, for I suppose that both are acknowledged on all hands, and that there is not any beauty but theirs to which men pay long obedience : at all events, if not by sympathy discovered, it is not in words explicable with what Divine lines and lights the exercise of godliness and charity will mould and gild the hardest and coldest countenance, neither to what darkness their departure will consign the loveliest. For there is not any virtue the exercise of which, even momentarily, will not impress a new fairness upon the features, neither on them only, but on the whole body, both the intelligence and the moral faculties have operation, for even all the movement and gestures, however slight, are different in their modes according to the mind that governs them, and on the gentleness and decision of just feeling there follows a grace of action, and through continuance of this a grace of form, which by no discipline may be taught or attained.

§ 7. How the soul culture interferes harmfully with the bodily ideal.

The third point to be considered with respect to the corporeal expression of mental character is, that there is a certain period of the soul culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame, the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel ; and that there is, in this indication of subduing of the mortal by the immortal part, an ideal glory of perhaps a purer and higher range than that of the more perfect material form. We conceive, I think, more nobly of the weak presence of Paul, than of the fair and ruddy countenance of Daniel.

§ 8. The inconsistency among the effects of the mental virtues on the form.

Now, be it observed that in our consideration of these three directions of mental influence, we have several times been compelled to stop short of definite conclusions owing to the apparent inconsistency of certain excellences and beauties to which they tend, as, first, of different kinds of intellect with each other; and secondly, of the moral faculties with the intellectual, (and if we had separately examined the moral emotions, we should have found certain inconsistencies among them also,) and again of the soul culture generally with the bodily perfections. Such inconsistencies we should find in the perfections of no other animal. The strength or swiftness of the dog are not inconsistent with his sagacity, nor is bodily labor in the ant or bee destructive of their acuteness of instinct. And this peculiarity of relation among the perfections of man is no result of his fall or sinfulness, but an evidence of his greater nobility, and of the goodness of God towards him. For the individuals of each race of lower animals, being not intended to hold among each other those relations of charity which are the privilege of humanity, are not adapted to each other's assistance, admiration, or support, by differences of power and function. But the love of the human race is increased by their individual differences, and the unity of the creature, as before we saw of all unity, made perfect by each having something to bestow and to receive, bound to the rest by a thousand various necessities and various gratitudes, humility in each rejoicing to admire in his fellow that which he finds not in himself, and each being in some respect the complement of his race. Therefore, in investigating the signs of the ideal or perfect type of humanity, we must not presume on the singleness of that type, and yet, on the other hand, we must cautiously distinguish between differences conceivably existing in a perfect state, and differences resulting from immediate and present operation of the Adamite curse. Of which the former are differences that bind, and the latter that separate. For although we can suppose the ideal or perfect human heart, and the perfect human intelligence, equally adapted to receive every right sensation and pursue every order of truth, yet as it is appointed for some to be in authority and others in obedience, some in solitary functions and others in relative ones, some to receive and others to give, some to teach and some to discover; and as all these varieties of office are not only conceivable as existing in a

§ 9. Is a sign of God's kind purpose towards the race.

perfect state of man, but seem almost to be implied by it, and at any rate cannot be done away with but by a total change of his constitution and dependencies, of which the imagination can take no hold ; so there are habits and capacities of expression induced by these various offices, which admit of many separate ideals of equal perfection, according to the functions of the creatures, so that there is an ideal of authority, of judgment, of affection, of reason, and of faith ; neither can any combination of these ideals be attained, not that the just judge is to be supposed incapable of affection, nor the king incapable of obedience, but as it is impossible that any essence short of the Divine should at the same instant be equally receptive of all emotions, those emotions which, by right and order, have the most usual victory, both leave the stamp of their habitual presence on the body, and render the individual more and more susceptible of them in proportion to the frequency of their prevalent recurrence ; added to which causes of distinctive character are to be taken into account the differences of age and sex, which, though seemingly of more finite influence, cannot be banished from any human conception. David, ruddy and of a fair countenance, with the brook stone of deliverance in his hand, is not more ideal than David leaning on the old age of Barzillai, returning chastened to his kingly home. And they who are as the angels of God in heaven, yet cannot be conceived as so assimilated that their different experiences and affections upon earth shall then be forgotten and effectless : the child taken early to his place cannot be imagined to wear there such a body, nor to have such thoughts, as the glorified apostle who has finished his course and kept the faith on earth. And so whatever perfections and likeness of love we may attribute to either the tried or the crowned creatures, there is the difference of the stars in glory among them yet ; differences of original gifts, though not of occupying till their Lord come, different dispensations of trial and of trust, of sorrow and support, both in their own inward, variable hearts, and in their positions of exposure or of peace, of the gourd shadow and the smiting sun, of calling at heat

§ 10. Consequent separation and difference of ideals.

of day or eleventh hour, of the house unroofed by faith, and the clouds opened by revelation : differences in warning, in mercies, in sicknesses, in signs, in time of calling to account ; like only they all are by that which is not of them, but the gift of God's unchangeable mercy. "I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

§ 11. The *effects* of the Adamite curse are to be distinguished from signs of its immediate activity.

Hence, then, be it observed, that what we must determinedly banish from the human form and countenance in our seeking of its ideal, is not everything which can be ultimately traced to the Adamite fall for its cause, but only the immediate operation and presence of the degrading power or sin. For there is not any part of our feeling of nature, nor can there be through eternity, which shall not be in some way influenced and affected by the fall, and that not in any way of degradation, for the renewing in the divinity of Christ is a nobler condition than ever that of Paradise, and yet throughout eternity it must imply and refer to the disobedience, and the corrupt state of sin and death, and the suffering of Christ himself, which can we conceive of any redeemed soul as for an instant forgetting, or as remembering without sorrow? Neither are the alternations of joy and such sorrow as by us is inconceivable, being only as it were a softness and silence in the pulse of an infinite felicity, inconsistent with the state even of the unfallen, for the angels who rejoice over repentance cannot but feel an uncomprehended pain as they try and try again in vain, whether they may not warm hard hearts with the brooding of their kind wings. So that we have not to banish from the ideal countenance the evidences of sorrow, nor of past suffering, nor even of past and conquered sin, but only the immediate operation of any evil, or the immediate coldness and hollowness of any good emotion. And hence in that contest before noted, between the body and the soul, we may often have to indicate the body as far conquered and outworn, and with signs of hard struggle and bitter pain upon it, and yet without ever diminishing the purity of its ideal ; and because it is not in the power of any human im-

§ 12. Which latter only are to be banished from ideal form.

agination to reason out or conceive the countless modifications of experience, suffering, and separated feeling, which have modelled and written their indelible images in various order upon every human countenance, so no right ideal can be reached by any combination of feature nor by any moulding and melting of individual beauties together, and still less without model or example conceived ; but there is a perfect ideal to be wrought out of *every* face around us that has on its forehead the writing and the seal of the angel ascending from the East,* by the earnest study and penetration of the written history thereupon, and the banishing of the blots and stains, wherein we still see in all that is human, the visible and instant operation of unconquered sin.

§ 13. Ideal form is only to be obtained by portraiture.

Now I see not how any of the steps of the argument by which we have arrived at this conclusion can be evaded, and yet it would be difficult to state anything more directly opposite to the usual teaching and practice of artists. It is usual to hear portraiture opposed to the pursuit of ideality, and yet we find that no face can be ideal which is not a portrait. Of this general principle, however, there are certain modifications which we must presently state ; let us first, however, pursue it a little farther, and deduce its practical consequences.

These are, first, that the pursuit of idealism in humanity, as of idealism in lower nature, can be successful only when followed through the most constant, patient, and humble rendering of actual models, accompanied with that earnest mental as well as ocular study of each, which can interpret all that is written upon it, disentangle the hieroglyphics of its sacred history, rend the veil of the bodily temple, and rightly measure the relations of good and evil contending within it for mastery,† that everything done without such study must be shallow and contemptible, that generalization or combination of individual character will end less in the mending than the losing of it, and, except in certain instances of which we shall presently take note, is valueless and vapid, even if it escape being painful from its want of truth, which in these days it often in some measure does, for we indeed find faces about us with want enough of life or wholesome character in them to justify anything. And that habit of the old and great painters of introducing portrait into all their highest works, I look to, not as error in them, but as the very source and root of their superiority in all things, for they were too great and too humble not to see in every face about them that which was above them, and which no fancies of theirs could match nor take place of, wherefore we find the custom of portraiture constant with them, both portraiture of study and for purposes of analysis, as with Leonardo ; and actual, professed, serviceable, hardworking portraiture of the men of their time, as with Raffaelle, and Titian, and Tintoret ; and portraiture of Love, as with Fra Bartolomeo of Savonarola, and Simon Memmi of Petrarch, and Giotto of Dante, and Gentile Bellini of a beloved imagination of Dandolo, and with Raffaelle constantly ; and portraiture in real downright necessity of models, even in their noblest works, as was the practice of Ghirlandajo perpetually, and Masaccio and Raffaelle, and manifestly of the men of highest and purest ideal purpose, as again, Giotto, and in his characteristic monkish heads, Angelico, and John Bellini, (note especially the St. Christopher at the side of that mighty picture of St. Jerome, at Venice,) and so of all : which practice had indeed a perilous tendency for men of debased mind, who used models such as and where they ought not, as Lippi and the corrupted Raffaelle ; and is found often at exceeding disadvantage among men who looked not at their models with intellectual or loving penetration, but took the outside of them, or perhaps took the evil and left the good, as Titian in that Academy study at Venice which is called a St. John, and all workers whatsoever that I know of, after Raffaelle's time, as Guido and the Caracci, and such others : but it is nevertheless the necessary and sterling basis of all ideal art, neither has any great man ever been able to do without it, nor dreamed of doing without it even to the close of his days.

---

* Rev. vii. 2.

† Compare Part. II. Sec. I. Chap. III. § 6.

§ 14. Instances among the greater of the ideal Masters.

And therefore there is not any greater sign of the utter want of vitality and hopefulness in the schools of the present day than that unhappy prettiness and sameness under which they mask, or rather for which they barter, in their lentile thirst, all the birthright and power of nature, which prettiness, wrought out and spun fine in the study, out of empty heads, till it hardly betters the blocks on which dresses and hair are tried in barbers' windows and milliners' books, cannot but be revolting to any man who has his eyes, even in a measure, open to the divinity of the immortal seal on the common features that he meets in the highways and hedges hourly and momentarily, outreaching all efforts of conception as all power of realization, were it Raffaelle's three times over, even when the glory of the wedding garment is not there.

§ 15. Evil results of opposite practice in modern times.

So far, then, of the use of the model and the preciousness of it in all art, from the highest to the lowest. But the use of the model is not all. It must be used in a certain way, and on this choice of right or wrong way all our ends are at stake, for the art, which is of no power without the model, is of pernicious and evil power if the model be wrongly used. What the right use is, has been at least established, if not fully explained, in the argument by which we arrived at the general principle.

§ 16. The right use of the model.

The right ideal is to be reached, we have asserted, only by the banishment of the immediate signs of sin upon the countenance and body. How, therefore, are the signs of sin to be known and separated?

No intellectual operation is here of any avail. There is not any reasoning by which the evidences of depravity are to be traced in movements of muscle or forms of feature; there is not any knowledge, nor experience, nor diligence of comparison that can be of avail. Here, as throughout the operation of the theoretic faculty, the perception is altogether moral, an instinctive love and clinging to the lines of light. Nothing but love can read the letters, nothing but sympathy catch the sound, there is no pure passion that can be understood or

§ 17. Ideal form to be reached only by love.

painted except by pureness of heart; the foul or blunt feeling will see itself in everything, and set down blasphemies; it will see Beelzebub in the casting out of devils, it will find its god of flies in every alabaster box of precious ointment. The indignation of zeal towards God (nemesis) it will take for anger against man, faith and veneration it will miss of, as not comprehending, charity it will turn into lust, compassion into pride, every virtue it will go over against, like Shimei, casting dust. But the right Christian mind will in like manner find its own image wherever it exists, it will seek for what it loves, and draw it out of all dens and caves, and it will believe in its being, often when it cannot see it, and always turn away its eyes from beholding vanity; and so it will lie lovingly over all the faults and rough places of the human heart, as the snow from heaven does over the hard, and black, and broken mountain rocks, following their forms truly, and yet catching light for them to make them fair, and that must be a steep and unkindly crag indeed which it cannot cover.

§ 18. Practical principles deducible.

Now of this spirit there will always be little enough in the world, and it cannot be given nor taught by men, and so it is of little use to insist on it farther, only I may note some practical points respecting the ideal treatment of human form, which may be of use in these thoughtless days. There is not the face, I have said, which the painter may not make ideal if he choose, but that subtile feeling which shall find out all of good that there is in any given countenance is not, except by concern for other things than art, to be acquired. But certain broad indications of evil there are which the bluntest feeling may perceive, and which the habit of distinguishing and casting out of would both ennoble the schools of art, and lead in time to greater acuteness of perception with respect to the less explicable characters of soul beauty.

§ 19. Expressions chiefly destructive of ideal character. 1st. Pride.

Those signs of evil which are commonly most manifest on the human features are roughly divisible into these four kinds, the signs of pride, of sensuality, of fear, and of cruelty. Any one of which will destroy the ideal character of the countenance and body

Now of these, the first, pride, is perhaps the most destructive of all the four, seeing it is the undermost and original story of all sin ; and it is base also from the necessary foolishness of it, because at its best, that is when grounded on a just estimation of our own elevation or superiority above certain others, it cannot but imply that our eyes look downward only, and have never been raised above our own measure, for there is not the man so lofty in his standing nor capacity but he must be humble in thinking of the cloud habitation and far sight of the angelic intelligences above him, and in perceiving what infinity there is of things he cannot know nor even reach unto, as it stands compared with that little body of things he can reach, and of which nevertheless he can altogether understand not one ; not to speak of that wicked and fond attributing of such excellency as he may have to himself, and thinking of it as his own getting, which is the real essence and criminality of pride, nor of those viler forms of it, founded on false estimation of things beneath us and irrational contemning of them : but taken at its best, it is still base to that degree that there is no grandeur of feature which it cannot destroy and make despicable, so that the first step towards the ennobling of any face is the ridding it of its vanity ; to which aim there cannot be anything more contrary than that principle of portraiture which prevails with us in these days, whose end seems to be the expression of vanity throughout, in face and in all circumstances of accompaniment, tending constantly to insolence of attitude, and levity and haughtiness of expression, and worked out farther in mean accompaniments of worldly splendor and possession, together with hints or proclamations of what the person has done or supposes himself to have done, which, if known, it is gratuitous in the portrait to exhibit, and if unknown, it is insolent in the portrait to proclaim ; whence has arisen such a school of portraiture as must make the people of the nineteenth century the shame of their descendants, and the butt of all time. To which practices are to be opposed both the glorious severity of Holbein, and the mighty and simple modesty of Raffaelle,

§ 20. Portraiture ancient and modern.

Titian, Giorgione, and Tintoret, with whom armor does not constitute the warrior, neither silk the dame. And from what feeling the dignity of that portraiture arose is best traceable at Venice, where we find their victorious doges painted neither in the toil of battle nor the triumph of return, nor set forth with thrones and curtains of state, but kneeling always crownless, and returning thanks to God for his help, or as priests, interceding for the nation in its affliction. Which feeling and its results have been so well traced out by Rio,* that I need not speak of it farther.

§ 21. Secondly, Sensuality.

That second destroyer of ideal form, the appearance of sensual character, though not less fatal in its operation on modern art, is more difficult to trace, owing to its peculiar subtlety. For it is not possible to say by what minute differences the right conception of the human form is separated from that which is luscious and foul: for the root of all is in the love and seeking of the painter, who, if of impure and feeble mind, will cover all that he touches with clay staining, as Bandinelli puts a foul scent of human flesh about his marble Christ, and as many whom I will not here name, among moderns; but if of mighty mind or pure, may pass through all places of foulness, and none will stay upon him, as Michael Angelo, or he will baptize all things and wash them with pure water, as our own Stothard. Now, so far as this power is dependent on the seeking of the artist, and is only to be seen in the work of good and spiritually-minded men, it is vain to attempt to teach or illustrate it, neither is it here the place to take note of the way in which it belongs to the representation of the mental image of things, instead of things themselves, of which we are to speak in treating of the imagination; but thus much may here be noted of broad, practical principle, that the purity of flesh painting depends in very considerable measure on the intensity and warmth of its color. For if it be opaque, and clay cold, and colorless, and devoid of all the radiance and

§ 22. How connected with impurity of color.

---

* De la Poésie Chrétienne. Forme de l'Art. Chap. VIII.

value of flesh, the lines of its true beauty, being severe and firm, will become so hard in the loss of the glow and gradation by which nature illustrates them, that the painter will be compelled to sacrifice them for a luscious fulness and roundness, in order to give the conception of flesh; which, being done, destroys ideality of form as of color, and gives all over to lasciviousness of surface; showing also that the painter sought for this, and this only, since otherwise he had not taken a subject in which he knew himself compelled to surrender all sources of dignity. Whereas, right splendor of color both bears out a nobler severity of form, and is in itself purifying and cleansing, like fire, furnishing also to the painter an excuse for the choice of his subject, seeing that he may be supposed as not having painted it but in the admiration of its abstract glory of color and form, and with no unworthy seeking. But the mere power of perfect and glowing color will in some sort redeem even a debased tendency of mind itself, as eminently the case with Titian, who, though of little feeling, and often treating base subjects, or elevated subjects basely, as in the disgusting Magdalen of the Pitti palace, and that of the Barberigo at Venice, yet redeems all by his glory of hue, so that he cannot paint altogether coarsely; and with Giorgione, who had nobler and more serious intellect, the sense of nudity is utterly lost, and there is no need nor desire of concealment any more, but his naked figures move among the trees like fiery pillars, and lie on the grass like flakes of sunshine.* With the religious painters on the other hand, such nudity as they were compelled to treat is redeemed as much by severity of form and hardness of line as by color, so that generally their draped figures are preferable, as in the Francia of our own gallery. But these, with Michael Angelo and the Venetians, except Titian, form a great group, pure in sight and aim, between which and all other schools by which the nude has been treated, there is a gulf fixed, and all the rest, compared

§ 23. And prevented by its splendor.

§ 24. Or by severity of drawing.

---

* As in the noble Louvre picture.

with them, seem striving how best to illustrate that of Spenser.

> "Of all God's works, which doe this worlde adorn,
> There is no one more faire, and excellent
> Than is man's body both for power and forme
> Whiles it is kept in sober government.
> But none than it more foul and indecent
> Distempered through misrule and passions bace."

Of these last, however, with whom ideality is lost, there are some worthier than others, according to that measure of color they reach, and power they possess, whence much may be forgiven to Rubens, (as to our own Etty,) less, as I think, to Correggio, who with less apparent and evident coarseness has more of inherent sensuality, wrought out with attractive and luscious refinement, and that alike in all subjects, as in the Madonna of the Incoronazione, over the high altar of San Giovanni at Parma, of which the head and upper portion of the figure, now preserved in the library, might serve as a model of attitude and expression to a ballet figurante:* and again in the lascivious St. Catherine of the Giorno, and in the Charioted Diana, (both at Parma,) not to name any of his works of aim more definitely evil. Beneath which again will fall the works devoid alike of art and decency, as that Susannah of Guido, in our own gallery, and so we may descend to the absolute clay of the moderns, only noticing in all how much of what is evil and base in subject or tendency, is redeemed by what is pure and right in hue, so that I do not assert that the purpose and object of many of the grander painters of the nude, as Titian for instance, was always elevated, but only that we, who cannot paint the lamp of fire within the earthen pitcher, must take other weapons in our left hands. And it is to be noted, also, that in climates where the body can be more openly and frequently visited by sun and weather, the nude both comes to be re-

§ 25. Degrees of descent in this respect: Rubens, Correggio, and Guido.

§ 26. And modern art.

---

* The Madonna turns her back to Christ, and bends her head over her shoulder to receive the crown, the arms being folded with studied grace over the bosom.

garded in a way more grand and pure, as necessarily awakening no ideas of base kind, (as pre-eminently with the Greeks,) and also from that exposure receives a firmness and sunny elasticity very different from the silky softness of the clothed nations of the north, where every model necessarily looks as if accidentally undressed ; and hence from the very fear and doubt with which we approach the nude, it becomes expressive of evil, and for that daring frankness of the old men, which seldom missed of human grandeur, even when it failed of holy feeling, we have substituted a mean, carpeted, gauze-veiled, mincing sensuality of curls and crisping pins, out of which I believe nothing can come but moral enervation and mental paralysis.

§ 27. Thirdly, ferocity and fear. The latter how to be distinguished from awe.

Respecting those two other vices of the human face, the expressions of fear and ferocity, there is less to be noted, as they only occasionally enter into the conception of character ; only it is most necessary to make careful distinction between the conception of power, destructiveness, or majesty, in matter, influence, or agent, and the actual fear of any of these, for it is possible to conceive of terribleness, without being in a position obnoxious to the danger of it, and so without fear, and the feeling arising from this contemplation of dreadfulness, ourselves being in safety, as of a stormy sea from the shore, is properly termed awe, and is a most noble passion ; whereas fear, mortal and extreme, may be felt respecting things ignoble, as the falling from a window, and without any conception of terribleness or majesty in the thing, or the accident dreaded ; and even when fear is felt respecting things sublime, as thunder, or storm of battle, yet the tendency of it is to destroy all power of contemplation of their majesty, and to freeze and shrink all the intellect into a shaking heap of clay, for absolute acute fear is of the same unworthiness and contempt from whatever source it arise, and degrades the mind and the outward bearing of the body alike, even though it be among hail of heaven and fire running along the ground. And so among the children of God, while there is always that fearful and

§ 28. Holy fear, how distinct from human terror.

bowed apprehension of his majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to him, which is called the fear of God, yet of real and essential fear there is not any but clinging of confidence to him, as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer, and perfect love, and casting out of fear, so that it is not possible that while the mind is rightly bent on him, there should be dread of anything either earthly or supernatural, and the more dreadful seems the height of his majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it, ("Of whom shall I be afraid?") so that they are as David was, devoted to his fear; whereas, on the other hand, those who, if they may help it, never conceive of God, but thrust away all thought and memory of him, and in his real terribleness and omnipresence fear him not nor know him, yet are of real, acute, piercing, and ignoble fear haunted for evermore; fear inconceiving and desperate that calls to the rocks, and hides in the dust; and hence the peculiar baseness of the expression of terror, a baseness attributed to it in all times, and among all nations, as of a passion atheistical, brutal, and profane. So also, it is always joined with ferocity, which is of all passions the least human; for of sensual desires there is license to men, as necessity; and of vanity there is intellectual cause, so that when seen in a brute it is pleasant and a sign of good wit; and of fear there is at times necessity and excuse, as being allowed for prevention of harm; but of ferocity there is no excuse nor palliation, but it is pure essence of tiger and demon, and it casts on the human face the paleness alike of the horse of Death, and the ashes of hell.

§ 29. Ferocity is joined always with fear. Its unpardonableness.

Wherefore, of all subjects that can be admitted to sight, the expressions of fear and ferocity are the most foul and detestable, and so there is in them I know not what sympathetic attractiveness for minds cowardly and base, as the vulgar of most nations, and forasmuch as they are easily rendered by men who can render nothing else, they are often trusted in by the herd of painters incapable and profane, as in that monstrous abortion of the first room of the Louvre, called the

§ 30. Such expressions how sought by painters powerless and impious.

Deluge, whose subject is pure, acute, mortal fear ; and so generally the senseless horrors of the modern French schools, spawn of the guillotine : also there is not a greater test of grandeur or meanness of mind than the expressions it will seek for and develop in the features and forms of men in fierce strife, whether determination and devotion, and all the other attributes of that unselfishness which constitutes heroism, as in the warrior of Agasias ; and distress not agitated nor unworthy, though mortal, as in the Dying Gladiator, or brutal ferocity and butchered agony, of which the lowest and least palliated examples are those battles of Salvator Rosa, which none but a man, base-born and thief-bred, could have dwelt upon for an instant without sickening, of which I will only name that example in the Pitti palace, wherein the chief figure in the foreground is a man with his arm cut off at the shoulder, run through the other hand into the breast with a lance.* And manifold instances of the same feeling are to be found in the repainting of the various representations of the Inferno, so common through Italy, more especially that of Orcagna's in the Campo Santo, wherein the few figures near the top that yet remain untouched are grand in their severe drawing and expressions of enduring despair, while those below, repainted by Solazzino, depend for their expressiveness upon torrents of blood ; so in the Inferno of Santa Maria Novella, and of the Arena chapel, not to speak of the horrible images of the Passion, by which vulgar Romanism has always striven to excite the languid sympathies of its untaught flocks. Of which foulness let us reason no farther, the very image and memory of them being pollution, only noticing this, that there has always been a morbid tendency in Romanism towards the contemplation of bodily pain, owing to the attribution of saving power to it, which, like every other moral error, has been of fatal effect in art, leaving not altogether without the stain and blame of it, even the highest of the pure Romanist painters ; as Fra Angelico, for instance, who, in his Passion subjects, always insists weakly on the bodily torture, and is unsparing of blood ; and Giotto, though his treatment is usually grander, as in that Crucifixion over the door of the Convent of St. Mark's, where the blood is hardly actual, but issues from the feet in a typical and conventional form, and becomes a crimson cord which is twined strangely beneath about a skull ; only that which these holy men did to enhance, even though in their means mistaken, the impression and power of the sufferings of Christ, or of his saints, is always in a measure noble, and to be distinguished with all reverence from the abominations of the irreligious painters following, as of Camillo Procaccini, in one of his martyrdoms in the Gallery of the Brera, at Milan, and other such, whose names may be well spared to the reader.

---

* Compare Michelet, (Du Prêtre, de la Femme, de la Famille,) Chap. III. note. He uses language too violent to be quoted ; but excuses Salvator by reference to the savage character of the Thirty Years' War. That this excuse has no validity may be proved by comparing the painter's treatment of other subjects. See Sec. II. Chap. III. § 19, note.

These, then, are the four passions whose presence in any degree on the human face is degradation. But of all passion it is to be generally observed, that it becomes ignoble either when entertained respecting unworthy objects, and therefore shallow or unjustifiable, or when of impious violence, and so destructive of human dignity. Thus grief is noble or the reverse, according to the dignity and worthiness of the object lamented, and the grandeur of the mind enduring it. The sorrow of mortified vanity or avarice is simply disgusting, even that of bereaved affection may be base if selfish and unrestrained. All grief that convulses the features is ignoble, because it is commonly shallow and certainly temporary, as in children, though in the shock and shiver of a strong man's features under sudden and violent grief there may be something of sublime. The grief of Guercino's Hagar, in the Brera gallery at Milan, is partly despicable, partly disgusting, partly ridiculous ; it is not the grief of the injured Egyptian, driven forth into the desert with the destiny of a nation in her heart, but of a servant of all work, turned away for stealing tea and sugar. Common painters forget that passion is not absolutely and in itself great or violent, but only

§ 31. Of passion generally.

§ 32. It is never to be for itself exhibited—at least on the face.

in proportion to the weakness of the mind it has to deal with; and that in exaggerating its outward signs, they are not exalting the passion, but evaporating the hero.* They think too much of passions as always the same in their nature, forgetting that the love of Achilles is different from the love of Paris, and of Alcestis from that of Laodamia. The use and value of passion is not as a subject in contemplation in itself, but as it breaks up the fountains of the great deep of the human mind, or displays its mightiness and ribbed majesty, as mountains are seen in their stability best among the coil of clouds; whence, in fine, I think it is to be held that all passion which attains overwhelming power, so that it is not as resisting, but as conquered, that the creature is contemplated, is unfit for high art, and destructive of the ideal character of the countenance: and in this respect, I cannot but hold Raffaelle to have erred in his endeavor to express passion of such acuteness in the human face; as in the fragment of the Massacre of the Innocents in our own gallery, (wherein, repainted though it be, I suppose the purpose of the master is yet to be understood,) for if such subjects are to be represented at all, their entire expression may be given without degrading the face, as we shall presently see done with unspeakable power by Tintoret,† and I think that all subjects of the kind, all human misery, slaughter, famine, plague, peril, and crime, are better in the main avoided, as of unprofitable and hardening influence, unless so far as out of the suffering, hinted rather than expressed, we may raise into nobler relief the eternal enduring of fortitude and affection, of mercy and self-devotion, or when, as by the threshing-floor of Ornan, and by the cave of Lazarus, the angel of the Lord is to be seen in the chastisement, and his love to be manifested to the despair of men.

Thus, then, we have in some sort enumerated those evil signs which are most necessary to be shunned in the seeking of ideal beauty,* though it is not the knowledge of them, but the dread and hatred of them, which will effectually aid the painter; as on the other hand it is not by mere admission of the loveliness of good and holy expression that its subtile characters are to be traced. Raffaelle himself, questioned on this subject, made doubtful answer; he probably could not trace through what early teaching, or by what dies of emotion the image had been sealed upon his heart. Our own Bacon, who well saw the impossibility of reaching it by the combination of many separate beauties, yet explains not the nature of that "kind of felicity" to which he attributes success. I suppose those who have conceived and wrought the loveliest things, have done so by no theorizing, but in simple labor of love, and could not, if put to a bar of rationalism, defend all points of what they had done, but painted it in their own delight, and to the delight of all besides, only always with that respect of conscience and "fear of swerving from that which is right, which maketh diligent observers of circumstances the loose regard whereof is the nurse of vulgar folly, no less than Solomon's attention thereunto was of natural furtherances the most effectual to make him eminent above others, for he gave good heed, and pierced everything to the very ground." †

---

* "The fire, that mounts the liquor, till it run o'er
In seeming to augment it, wastes it."
HENRY VIII.

† Sec. II. Chap. III. § 22.

§ 33. Recapitulation.

With which good heed, and watching of the instants when men feel warmly and rightly, as the Indians do for the diamond in their washing of sand, and that with the desire and hope of finding true good in men, and not with the ready vanity that sets itself to fiction instantly, and carries its potter's wheel about with it always, (off which there will come only clay vessels of regular shape after all,) instead of the pure mirror that can show the seraph standing by the human body—standing as signal to the heavenly land;* with this heed and this charity, there are none of us that may not bring down that lamp upon his path of which Spenser sang :—

---

* Let it be observed that it is always of beauty, not of human character in its lower and criminal modifications, that we have been speaking. That variety of character, therefore, which we have affirmed to be necessary, is the variety of Giotto and Angelico, not of Hogarth. Works concerned with the exhibition of general character, are to be spoken of in the consideration of Ideas of Relation.

† Hooker, Book V. Chap. I. § 2.

> "That beauty is not, as fond men misdeem
> An outward show of things, that only seem;
> But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
> That light proceeds, which kindleth lover's fire,
> Shall never be extinguished nor decay.
> But when the vital spirits do expire,
> Unto her native planet shall retire,
> For it is heavenly born and cannot die,
> Being a parcel of the purest sky."

CHAPTER XV.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS RESPECTING THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

Of the sources of beauty open to us in the visible world, we have now obtained a view which, though most feeble in its grasp and scanty in its detail, is yet general in its range.

§ 1. There are no sources of the emotion of beauty more than those found in things visible.

Of no other sources than these visible can we, by any effort in our present condition of existence, conceive. For what revelations have been made to humanity inspired, or caught up to heaven of things to the heavenly region belonging, have been either by unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, or else by their very nature incommunicable, except in types and shadows; and ineffable by words belonging to earth, for of things different from the visible, words appropriated to the visible can convey no image. How different from earthly gold that clear pavement of the city might have seemed to the eyes of St. John, we of unreceived sight cannot know; neither of that strange jasper and sardine can we conceive the likeness which he assumed that sat on the throne above the crystal sea; neither what seeming that was of slaying that the Root of David bore in the midst of the elders; neither what change it was upon the form of the fourth of them that walked in the furnace of Dura, that even the wrath of idolatry knew for the likeness of the Son of God. The knowing that is here permitted to us is either of things outward only, as in those it is whose eyes faith never opened, or else of that dark part that her glass shows feebly, of things supernatural, that gleaming of the Divine form among the mortal crowd, which all may catch if they will climb the sycamore and wait; nor how much of God's abiding at the house may be granted to those that so seek, and how much more may be opened to them in the breaking of bread, cannot be said; but of that only we can reason which is in a measure revealed to all, of that which is by constancy and purity of affection to be found in the things and the beings around us upon earth.

---

* "Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood,
A man all light, a seraph man
By every corse there stood.
This seraph band, each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight;
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light."

ANCIENT MARINER.

§ 2. What imperfection exists in visible things. How in a sort by imagination removable.

Now, among all those things whose beauty we have hitherto examined, there has been a measure of imperfection. Either inferiority of kind, as the beauty of the lower animals, or resulting from degradation, as in man himself; and although in considering the beauty of human form, we arrived at some conception of restoration, yet we found that even the restoration must be in some respect imperfect, as incapable of embracing all qualities, moral and intellectual, at once, neither to be freed from all signs of former evil done or suffered. Consummate beauty, therefore, is not to be found on earth, though often such intense measure of it as shall drown all capacity of receiving; neither is it to be respecting humanity legitimately conceived. But by certain operations of the imagination upon ideas of beauty received from things around us, it is possible to conceive respecting superhuman creatures (of that which is more than creature, no creature ever conceived) a beauty in some sort greater than we see. Of this beauty, however, it is impossible to determine anything until we have traced the imaginative operations to which it owes its being, of which operations this much may be prematurely said, that they are not creative, that no new ideas are elicited by them, and that their whole function is only a certain dealing with, concentrating or mode of regarding the impressions received from external things, that therefore, in the beauty to which they will conduct us, there will be found no new element, but only a peculiar combination or phase of those elements that we now know, and that therefore we may at present draw all the conclusions with respect to the rank of the theoretic faculty, which the knowledge of its subject matter can warrant.

§ 3. Which however affects not our present conclusions.

We have seen that this subject matter is referable to four general heads. It is either the record of conscience, printed in things external, or it is a symbolizing of Divine attributes in matter, or it is the felicity of living things, or the perfect fulfilment of their duties and functions. In all cases it is something Divine, either the approving voice of God, the glorious symbol of him, the evidence of his kind presence, or the obedience to his will by him induced and supported.

§ 4. The four sources from which the pleasure of beauty is derived are all divine.

All these subjects of contemplation are such as we may suppose will remain sources of pleasure to the perfected spirit throughout eternity. Divine in their nature they are addressed to the immortal part of men.

There remain, however, two points to be noticed before I can hope that this conclusion will be frankly accepted by the reader. If it be the moral part of us to which beauty addresses itself, how does it happen, it will be asked, that it is ever found in the works of impious men, and how is it possible for such to desire or conceive it?

§ 5. What objections may be made to this conclusion.

On the other hand, how does it happen that men in high state of moral culture are often insensible to the influence of material beauty, and insist feebly upon it as an instrument of soul culture.

These two objections I shall endeavor briefly to answer, not that they can be satisfactorily treated without that detailed examination of the whole body of great works of art, on which I purpose to enter in the following volume. For the right determination of these two questions is indeed the whole end and aim of my labor, (and if it could be here accomplished, I should bestow no effort farther,) namely, the proving that no supreme power of art can be attained by impious men ; and that the neglect of art, as an interpreter of divine things, has been of evil consequence to the Christian world.

At present, however, I would only meet such objections as must immediately arise in the reader's mind.

§ 6. Typical beauty may be æsthetically pursued. Instances.

And first, it will be remembered that I have, throughout the examination of typical beauty, asserted its instinctive power, the moral meaning of it being only discoverable by faithful thought. Now this instinctive sense of it varies in intensity among men, being given, like the hearing ear of music, to some more than to others : and if those to whom it is given in large measure be unfortunately men of impious or unreflecting spirit, it is very possible that the perceptions of beauty should be by them cultivated on principles merely æsthetic, and so lose their hallowing power ; for though the good seed in them is altogether divine, yet, there being no blessing in the springing thereof, it brings forth wild grapes in the end. And yet these wild grapes are well discernible, like the deadly gourds of Gilgal. There is in all works of such men a taint and stain, and jarring discord, blacker and louder exactly in proportion to the moral deficiency, of which the best proof and measure is to be found in their treatment of the human form, (since in landscape it is nearly impossible to introduce definite expression of evil,) of which the highest beauty has been attained only once, and then by no system taught painter, but by a most holy Dominican monk of Fiesole ; and beneath him all stoop lower and lower in proportion to their inferior sanctity, though with more or less attainment of that which is noble, according to their intellectual power and earnestness, as Raffaelle in his St. Cecilia, (a mere study of a passionate, dark-eyed, large formed Italian model,) and even Perugino, in that there is about his noblest faces a shortcoming, indefinable; an absence of the full out-pouring of the sacred spirit that there is in Angelico; traceable, I doubt not, to some deficiencies and avaricious flaws of his heart, whose consequences in his conduct were such as to give Vasari hope that his lies might stick to him (for the contradiction of which in the main, if there be not contradiction enough in every line that the hand of Perugino drew, compare Rio, de la Poësie Chrétienne, and note also what Rio has singularly missed observing, that Perugino, in his portrait of himself in the Florence gallery, has put a scroll into the hand, with the words "Timete Deum," thus surely indicating that which he considered his duty and message:) and so all other even of the sacred painters, not to speak of the lower body of men in whom, on the one hand, there is marked sensuality and impurity in all that they seek of beauty, as in Correggio and Guido, or, on the other, a want in measure of the sense of beauty itself, as in Rubens and Titian, showing itself in the adoption of coarse types of feature and form; sometimes also (of which I could find instances in modern times,) in a want of evidence of delight in what they do; so that, after they have rendered some passage of exceeding beauty, they will suffer some discordant point to interfere with it, and it will not hurt them, as if they had no pleasure in that which was best, but had done it in inspiration that was not profitable to them, as deaf men might touch an instrument with a feeling in their heart, which yet returns not outwardly upon them, and so know not when they play false: and sometimes by total want of choice, for there is a choice of love in all rightly tempered men, not that ignorant and insolent choice which rejects half nature as empty of the right, but that pure choice that fetches the right out of everything; and where this is wanting, we may see men walking up and down in dry places, finding no rest, ever and anon

§ 7. How interrupted by false feeling.

doing something noble, and yet not following it up, but dwelling the next instant on something impure or profitless with the same intensity and yet impatience, so that they are ever wondered at and never sympathized with, and while they dazzle all, they lead none; and then, beneath these again, we find others on whose works there are definite signs of evil mind, ill-repressed, and then inability to avoid, and at last perpetual seeking for and feeding upon horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin, as eminently in Salvator and Caravaggio, and the lower Dutch schools, only in these last less painfully as they lose the villanous in the brutal, and the horror of crime in its idiocy.

§ 8. Greatness and truth are sometimes by the Deity sustained and spoken in and through evil men.

But secondly, it is to be noted that it is neither by us unascertainable what moments of pure feeling or aspiration may occur to men of minds apparently cold and lost, nor by us to be pronounced through what instruments, and in what strangely occurrent voices, God may choose to communicate good to men. It seems to me that much of what is great, and to all men beneficial, has been wrought by those who neither intended nor knew the good they did, and that many mighty harmonies have been discoursed by instruments that had been dumb or discordant, but that God knew their stops. The Spirit of Prophecy consisted with the avarice of Balaam, and the disobedience of Saul. Could we spare from its page that parable, which he said, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open, though we know that the sword of his punishment was then sharp in its sheath beneath him in the plains of Moab? or shall we not lament with David over the shield cast away on the Gilboa mountains, of him to whom God gave *another heart* that day when he turned his back to go from Samuel? It is not our part to look hardly, nor to look always, to the character or the deeds of men, but to accept from all of them, and to hold fast that which we can prove good, and feel to be ordained for us. We know that whatever good there is in them is itself divine, and wherever we see the virtue of ardent labor and self-surrendering to a single purpose, wherever we find constant reference made to the written scripture of natural beauty, this at least we know is great and good, this we know is not granted by the counsel of God, without purpose, nor maintained without result: Their interpretation we may accept, into their labor we may enter, but they themselves must look to it, if what they do has no intent of good, nor any reference to the Giver of all gifts. Selfish in their industry, unchastened in their wills, ungrateful for the Spirit that is upon them, they may yet be helmed by that Spirit whithersoever the Governor listeth; involuntary instruments they may become of others' good; unwillingly they may bless Israel, doubtingly discomfit Amalek, but shortcoming there will be of their glory, and sure of their punishment.

§ 9. The second objection arising from the coldness of Christian men to external beauty.

I believe I shall be able, incidentally, in succeeding investigations, to prove this shortcoming, and to examine the sources of it, not absolutely indeed, (seeing that all reasoning on the characters of men must be treacherous, our knowledge on this head being as corrupt as it is scanty, while even in living with them it is impossible to trace the working, or estimate the errors of great and self-secreted minds,) but at least enough to establish the general principle upon such grounds of fact as may satisfy those who demand the practical proof (often in a measure impossible) of things which can hardly be doubted in their rational consequence. At present, it would be useless to enter on an examination for which we have no materials; and I proceed, therefore, to notice that other and opposite error of Christian men in thinking that there is little use or value in the operation of the theoretic faculty, not that I at present either feel myself capable, or that this is the place for the discussion of that vast question of the operation of taste (as it is called) on the minds of men, and the national value of its teaching, but I wish shortly to reply to that objection which might be urged to the real moral dignity of the faculty, that many Christian men seem to be in themselves without it, and even to discountenance it in others.

It has been said by Schiller, in his letters on æsthetic culture, that the sense of beauty never farthered the performance of a single duty.

Although this gross and inconceivable falsity will hardly be accepted by any one in so many terms, seeing that there are few so utterly lost but that they receive, and know that they receive, at certain moments, strength of some kind, or rebuke from the appealings of outward things; and that it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky; though, I say, this falsity is not wholly and in terms admitted, yet it seems to be partly and practically so in much of the doing and teaching even of holy men, who in the recommending of the love of God to us, refer but seldom to those things in which it is most abundantly and immediately shown; though they insist much on his giving of bread, and raiment, and health, (which he gives to all inferior creatures,) they require us not to thank him for that glory of his works which he has permitted us alone to perceive: they tell us often to meditate in the closet, but they send us not, like Isaac, into the fields at even, they dwell on the duty of self-denial, but they exhibit not the duty of delight. Now there are reasons for this, manifold, in the toil and warfare of an earnest mind, which, in its efforts at the raising of men from utter loss and misery, has often but little time or disposition to take heed of anything more than the bare life, and of those so occupied it is not for us to judge, but I think, that, of the weaknesses, distresses, vanities, schisms, and sins, which often even in the holiest men, diminish their usefulness, and mar their happiness, there would be fewer if, in their struggle with nature fallen, they sought for more aid from nature undestroyed. It seems to me that the real sources of bluntness in the feelings towards the splendor of the grass and glory of the flower, are less to be found in ardor of occupation, in seriousness of compassion, or

§ 10. Reasons for this coldness in the anxieties of the world. These anxieties overwrought and criminal.

heavenliness of desire, than in the turning of the eye at intervals of rest too selfishly within; the want of power to shake off the anxieties of actual and near interest, and to leave results in God's hands; the scorn of all that does not seem immediately apt for our purposes, or open to our understanding, and perhaps something of pride, which desires rather to investigate than to feel.

§ 11. Evil consequences of such coldness.

I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them. If, for every rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their hearts; if for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of his kindness to them; if side by side with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine, instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable, to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place.

§ 12. Theoria the service of Heaven.

At all events, whatever may be the inability in this present life to mingle the full enjoyment of the Divine works with the full discharge of every practical duty, and confessedly in many cases this must be, let us not attribute the inconsistency to any indignity of the faculty of contemplation, but to the sin and the suffering of the fallen state, and the change of order from the keeping of the garden to the tilling of the ground. We cannot say how far it is right or agreeable with God's will, while men are perishing round about us, while grief, and pain, and wrath, and impiety, and death, and all the powers of the air, are working wildly and evermore, and the cry of blood going up to heaven, that any of us should take hand from the plough; but this we know, that there will come a time when the service of God shall be the beholding of him ; and though in these stormy seas, where we are now driven up and down, his Spirit is dimly seen on the face of the waters, and we are left to cast anchors out of the stern, and wish for the day, that day will come, when, with the evangelists on the crystal and stable sea, all the creatures of God shall be full of eyes within, and there shall be " no more curse, but his servants shall serve him, and shall see his face."

SECTION II.

OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE THREE FORMS OF IMAGINATION.

§ 1. A partial examination only of the imagination is to be attempted.

We have hitherto been exclusively occupied with those sources of pleasure which exist in the external creation, and which in any faithful copy of it must to a certain extent exist also.

These sources of beauty, however, are not presented by any very great work of art in a form of pure transcript. They invariably receive the reflection of the mind under whose shadow they have passed, and are modified or colored by its image.

This modification is the Work of Imagination.

As, in the course of our succeeding investigation, we shall be called upon constantly to compare sources of beauty existing in nature with the images of them presented by the human mind, it is very necessary for us shortly to review the conditions and limits of the imaginative faculty, and to ascertain by what tests we may distinguish its sane, healthy, and profitable operation, from that which is erratic, diseased, and dangerous.

It is neither desirable nor possible here to examine or illustrate in full the essence of this mighty faculty. Such an examination would require a review of the whole field of literature, and would alone demand a volume. Our present task is not to explain or exhibit full portraiture of this function of the mind in all its relations, but only to obtain some certain tests by which we may determine whether it be very imagination or no, and unmask all impersonations of it, and this chiefly with respect to art, for in literature the faculty takes a thousand forms, according to the matter it has to treat, and becomes like the princess of the Arabian tale, sword, eagle, or fire, according to the war it wages, sometimes piercing, sometimes soaring, sometimes illumining, retaining no image of itself, except its supernatural power, so that I shall content myself with tracing that particular form of it, and unveiling those imitations of it only, which are to be found, or feared, in painting, referring to other creations of mind only for illustration.

§ 2. The works of the metaphysicians how nugatory with respect to this faculty.

Unfortunately, the works of metaphysicians will afford us in this most interesting inquiry no aid whatsoever. They who are constantly endeavoring to fathom and explain the essence of the faculties of mind, are sure in the end to lose sight of all that cannot be explained, (though it may be defined and felt,) and because, as I shall presently show, the essence of the imaginative faculty is utterly mysterious and inexplicable, and to be recognized in its results only, or in the negative results of its absence, the metaphysicians, as far as I am acquainted with their works, miss it altogether, and never reach higher than a definition of fancy by a false name.

What I understand by fancy will presently appear, not that I contend for nomenclature, but only for distinction between two mental faculties, by whatever name they be called, one the source of all that is great in the poetic arts ; the other merely decorative and entertaining, but which are often confounded together, and which have so much in common as to render strict definition of either difficult.

Dugald Stewart's meagre definition may serve us for a starting point. "Imagination," he says, "includes conception or simple apprehension, which enables us to form a notion of those former objects of perception or of knowledge, out of which we are to make a selection; abstraction, which separates the selected materials from the qualities and circumstances which are connected with them in nature; and judgment or taste, which selects the materials and directs their combination. To these powers we may add that particular habit of association to which I formerly gave the name of fancy, as it is this which presents to our choice all the different materials which are subservient to the efforts of imagination, and which may therefore be considered as forming the ground-work of poetical genius."

§ 3. The definition of D. Stewart, how inadequate.

(By fancy in this passage, we find on referring to the chapter treating of it, that nothing more is meant than the rapid occurrence of ideas of sense to the mind.)

Now, in this definition, the very point and purpose of all the inquiry is missed. We are told that judgment or taste "directs the combination." In order that anything may be directed, an end must be previously determined: What is the faculty that determines this end? and of what frame and make, how boned and fleshed, how conceived or seen, is the end itself? Bare judgment, or taste, cannot approve of what has no existence; and yet by Dugald Stewart's definition we are left to their catering among a host of conceptions, to produce a combination which, as they work for, they must see and approve before it exists. This power of prophecy is the very essence of the whole matter, and it is just that inexplicable part which the metaphysician misses.

As might be expected from his misunderstanding of the faculty, he has given an instance entirely nugatory.* It would be difficult to find in Milton a passage in which less power of imagination was shown, than the description of Eden, if, as I suppose, this be the passage meant, at the beginning of the fourth book, in which I can find three expressions only in which this power is shown, the "*burnished* with golden rind, hung amiable" of the Hesperian fruit, the "*lays forth* her purple grape" of the vine and the "*fringed* bank with myrtle crowned," of the lake, and these are not what Stewart meant, but only that accumulation of bowers, groves, lawns, and hillocks, which is not imagination at all, but composition, and that of the commonest kind. Hence, if we take any passage in which there is real imagination, we shall find Stewart's hypothesis not only inefficient and obscure, but utterly inapplicable.

---

* He continues thus, "To illustrate these observations, let us consider the steps by which Milton must have proceeded, in creating his

§ 4. This instance nugatory.

§ 5. Various instances.

Take one or two at random.

> "On the other side,
> Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
> Unterrified, and like a comet burned
> That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
> In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
> Shakes pestilence and war."

(Note that the word incensed is to be taken in its literal and material sense, set on fire.) What taste or judgment was it that directed this combination? or is there nothing more than taste or judgment here?

imaginary garden of Eden. When he first proposed to himself that subject of description, it is reasonable to suppose that a variety of the most striking scenes which he had seen, crowded into his mind. The association of ideas suggested them and the power of conception placed each of them before him with all its beauties and imperfections. In every natural scene, if we destine it for any particular purpose, there are defects and redundancies, which art may sometimes, but cannot always correct. But the power of imagination is unlimited. She can create and annihilate, and dispose at pleasure her woods, her rocks, and her rivers. Milton, accordingly, would not copy his Eden from any one scene, but would select from each the features which were most eminently beautiful. The power of abstraction enabled him to make the separation, and taste directed him in the selection."

> "Ten paces huge
> He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
> His massy spear upstaid, as if on earth
> Winds under ground, or waters forcing way
> *Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat*
> *Half-sunk with all his pines.*
>
> "Together both ere the high lawns appeared
> *Under the opening eyelids* of the morn,
> We drove a field, and both together heard
> What time the gray-fly winds her *sultry* horn.
>
> "Missing thee, I walk unseen
> On the dry smooth shaven green,
> To behold the wandering moon
> Riding near her highest noon,
> *Like one that had been led astray*,
> Through the heavens' wide pathless way,
> And oft *as if her head she bowed*
> Stooping through a fleecy cloud."

It is evident that Stewart's explanation utterly fails in all these instances, for there is in them no "combination" whatsoever, but a particular mode of regarding the qualities or appearances of a single thing, illustrated and conveyed to us by the image of another; and the act of imagination, observe, is not the selection of this image, but the mode of regarding the object.

But the metaphysician's definition fails yet more utterly, when we look at the imagination neither as regarding, nor combining, but as penetrating.

> "My gracious Silence, Hail:
> Wouldst thou have laughed, had I come coffin'd home
> That weep'st to see me triumph. Ah! my dear,
> Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
> And mothers that lack sons."

How did Shakspeare *know* that Virgilia could not speak?

This knowledge, this intuitive and penetrative perception, is still one of the forms, the highest, of imagination, but there is no combination of images here.

We find, then, that the imagination has three totally dis tinct functions. It combines, and by combination creates new forms; but the secret principle of this combination has not been shown by the analysts. Again, it treats or regards both the simple images and its own combinations in peculiar ways; and, thirdly, it penetrates, analyzes, and reaches truths by no other faculty discoverable. These its three functions, I shall endeavor to illustrate, but not in this order: the most logical mode of treatment would be to follow the order in which commonly the mind works; that is, penetrating first, combining next, and treating or regarding, finally; but this arrangement would be inconvenient, because the acts of penetration and of regard are so closely connected, and so like in their relations to other mental acts, that I wish to examine them consecutively, and the rather, because they have to do with higher subject matter than the mere act of combination, whose distinctive nature, that property which makes it imagination and not composition, it will I think be best to explain at setting out, as we easily may, in subjects familiar and material. I shall therefore examine the imaginative faculty in these three forms; first, as combining or associative; secondly, as analytic or penetrative; thirdly, as regardant or contemplative.

§ 6. The three operations of the imagination. Penetrative, associative, contemplative.

CHAPTER II.

OF IMAGINATION ASSOCIATIVE.

In order to render our inquiry as easy as possible, we shall consider the dealing of the associative imagination with the simplest possible matter, that is,—with conceptions of material things. First, therefore, we must define the nature of these conceptions themselves.

§ 1. Of simple conception.

After beholding and examining any material object, our knowledge respecting it exists in two different forms. Some facts exist in the brain in a verbal form, as known, but not conceived, as, for instance, that it was heavy or light, that it was eight inches and a quarter long, etc., of which length we cannot have accurate conception, but only such a conception as might attach to a length of seven inches or nine; and which fact we may recollect without any conception of the object at all. Other facts respecting it exist in the brain in a visible form, not always visible, but voluntarily visible, as its being white, or having such and such a complicated shape, as the form of a rose-bud, for instance, which it would be difficult to express verbally, neither is it retained by the brain in a verbal form, but a visible one, that is, when we wish for knowledge of its form for immediate use, we summon up a vision or image of the thing; we do not remember it in words, as we remember the fact that it took so many days to blow, or that it was gathered at such and such a time.

The knowledge of things retained in this visible form is called conception by the metaphysicians, which term I shall retain; it is inaccurately called imagination by Taylor, in the passage quoted by Wordsworth in the preface to his poems, not but that the term imagination is etymologically and rightly expressive of it, but we want that term for a higher faculty.

§ 2. How connected with verbal knowledge.

There are many questions respecting this faculty of conception of very great interest, such as the exact amount of aid that verbal knowledge renders so visible, (as, for instance, the verbal knowledge that a flower has five, or seven, or ten petals, or that a muscle is inserted at such and such a point of the bone, aids the conception of the flower or the limb;) and again, what amount of aid the visible knowledge renders to the verbal, as for instance, whether any one, being asked a question about some animal or thing, which instantly and from verbal knowledge he cannot answer, may have such power of summoning up the image of the animal or thing as to ascertain the fact, by actual beholding, (which I do not assert, but can conceive to be possible;) and again, what is that indefinite and subtile character of the conception itself in most men, which admits not of being by themselves traced or realized, and yet is a sure test of likeness in any representation of the thing; like an intaglio, with a front light on it, whose lines cannot be seen, and yet they will fit one definite form only, and that accurately; these and many other questions it is irrelevant at present to determine,* since to forward our present purpose, it will be well to suppose the conception, aided by verbal knowledge, to be absolutely perfect, and we will suppose a man to retain such clear image of a large number of the material things he has seen, as to be able to set down any of them on paper with perfect fidelity and absolute memory † of their most minute features.

In thus setting them down on paper, he works, I suppose, exactly as he would work from nature, only copying the remembered image in his mind, instead of the real thing. He is, therefore, still nothing more than a copyist. There is no exercise of imagination in this whatsoever.

§ 3. How used in composition.

But over these images, vivid and distinct as nature herself, he has a command which over nature he has not. He can summon any that he chooses, and if, therefore, any group of them which he received from nature be not altogether to his mind, he is at liberty to remove some of the component images, add others foreign, and re-arrange the whole.

Let us suppose, for instance, that he has perfect knowledge of the forms of the Aiguilles Verte and Argentière, and of the great glacier between them at the upper extremity of the valley of Chamonix. The forms of the mountains please him, but the presence of the glacier suits not his purpose. He removes the glacier, sets the mountains farther apart, and introduces between them part of the valley of the Rhone.

This is composition, and is what Dugald Stewart mistook for imagination, in the kingdom of which noble faculty it has no part nor lot.

The essential characters of composition, properly so called, are these. The mind which desires the new feature summons up before it those images which it supposes to be of the kind wanted, of these it takes the one which it supposes to be fittest, and tries it: if it will not answer, it tries another, until it has obtained such an association as pleases it.

---

* Compare Chapter IV. of this Section.

† On the distinction rightly made by the metaphysicians between conception absolute and conception accompanied by reference to past time, (or memory,) it is of no necessity here to insist.

§ 4. Characteristics of composition.

In this operation, if it be of little sensibility, it regards only the absolute beauty or value of the images brought before it; and takes that or those which it thinks fairest or most interesting, without any regard to their sympathy with those for whose company they are destined. Of this kind is all vulgar composition; the "Mulino" of Claude, described in the preface to the first part, being a characteristic example.

If the mind be of higher feeling, it will look to the sympathy or contrast of the features, to their likeness or dissimilarity; it will take, as it thinks best, features resembling or discordant, and if when it has put them together, it be not satisfied, it will repeat the process on the features themselves, cutting away one part and putting in another, so working more and more delicately down to the lowest details, until by dint of experiment, of repeated trials and shiftings, and constant reference to principles, (as that two lines must not mimic one another, that one mass must not be equal to another,) etc., it has morticed together a satisfactory result.

This process will be more and more rapid and effective, in proportion to the artist's powers of conception and association, these in their turn depending on his knowledge and experience. The distinctness of his powers of conception will give value, point, and truth to every fragment that he draws from memory. His powers of association, and his knowledge of nature will pour out before him in greater or less number and appositeness the images from which to choose. His experience guides him to quick discernment in the combination, when made, of the parts that are offensive and require change.

§ 5. What powers are implied by it. The first of the three functions of fancy.

The most elevated power of mind of all these, is that of association, by which images apposite or resemblant, or of whatever kind wanted, are called up quickly and in multitudes. When this power is very brilliant, it is called fancy, not that this is the only meaning of the word fancy, but it is the meaning of it in relation to that function of the imagination which we are here considering; for fancy has three functions; one subordinate to each of the three functions of the imagination.

Great differences of power are manifested among artists in this respect, some having hosts of distinct images always at their command, and rapidly discerning resemblance or contrast; others having few images, and obscure, at their disposal, nor readily governing those they have.

Where the powers of fancy are very brilliant, the picture becomes highly interesting; if her images are systematically and rightly combined, and truthfully rendered, it will become even impressive and instructive; if wittily and curiously combined, it will be captivating and entertaining.

§ 6. Imagination not yet manifested.

But all this time the imagination has not once shown itself. All this (except the gift of fancy) may be taught, all this is easily comprehended and analyzed; but imagination is neither to be taught, nor by any efforts to be attained, nor by any acuteness of discernment dissected or analyzed.

We have seen that in composition the mind can only take cognizance of likeness or dissimilarity, or of abstract beauty among the ideas it brings together. But neither likeness nor dissimilarity secures harmony. We saw in the chapter on unity that likeness destroyed harmony or unity of membership, and that difference did not necessarily secure it, but only that particular imperfection in each of the harmonizing parts which can only be supplied by its fellow part. If, therefore, the combination made is to be harmonious, the artist must induce in each of its component parts (suppose two only, for simplicity's sake,) such imperfection as that the other shall put it right. If one of them be perfect by itself, the other will be an excrescence. Both must be faulty when separate, and each corrected by the presence of the other. If he can accomplish this, the result will be beautiful; it will be a whole, an organized body with dependent members;—he is an inventor. If not, let his separate features be as beautiful, as apposite, or as resemblant as they may, they form no whole. They are two members glued together. He is only a carpenter and joiner.

§ 7. Imagination is the correlative conception of imperfect component parts.

Now, the conceivable imperfections of any single feature are infinite. It is impossible, therefore, to fix upon a form of imperfection in the one, and try with this all the forms of imperfection of the other until one fits; but the two imperfections must be co-relatively and simultaneously conceived.

This is imagination, properly so called, imagination associative, the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses, and one which will appear more and more marvellous the longer we consider it. By its operation, two ideas are chosen out of an infinite mass, (for it evidently matters not whether the imperfections be conceived out of the infinite number conceivable, or selected out of a number recollected,) two ideas which are separately wrong, which together shall be right, and of whose unity, therefore, the idea must be formed at the instant they are seized, as it is only in that unity that either are good, and therefore only the *conception of that unity can prompt the preference.* Now, what is that prophetic action of mind, which, out of an infinite mass of things that cannot be tried together, seizes, at the same instant two that are fit for each other, together right; yet each disagreeable alone.

§ 8. Material analogy with imagination.

This operation of mind, so far as I can see, is absolutely inexplicable, but there is something like it in chemistry.

"The action of sulphuric acid on metallic zinc affords an instance of what was once called disposing affinity. Zinc decomposes pure water at common temperatures with extreme slowness; but as soon as sulphuric acid is added, decomposition of the water takes place rapidly, though the acid merely unites with oxide of zinc. The former explanation was, that the affinity of the acid for oxide of zinc disposed the metal to unite with oxygen, and thus enabled it to decompose water; that is, the oxide of zinc was supposed to produce an effect previous to its existence. The obscurity of this explanation arises from regarding changes as consecutive, which are in reality simultaneous. There is no succession in the process, the oxide of zinc is not formed previously to its combination with the acid, but at the same instant. There is, as it were, but one chemical change, which consists in the combination at one and the same moment of zinc with oxygen, and of oxide of zinc with the acid; and this change occurs because these two affinities, acting together, overcome the attraction of oxygen and hydrogen for one another."*

Now, if the imaginative artist will permit us, with all deference, to represent his combining intelligence under the figure of sulphuric acid; and if we suppose the fragment of zinc to be embarrassed among infinitely numerous fragments of diverse metals, and the oxygen dispersed and mingled among gases countless and indistinguishable, we shall have an excellent type in material things of the action of the imagination on the immaterial. Both actions are, I think, inexplicable, for however simultaneous the chemical changes may be, yet the causing power is the affinity of the acid for what has no existence. It is neither to be explained how that affinity operates on atoms uncombined, nor how the artist's desire for an unconceived whole prompts him to the selection of necessary divisions.

§ 9. The grasp and dignity of imagination.

Now, this operation would be wonderful enough, if it were concerned with two ideas only. But a powerfully imaginative mind seizes and combines at the same instant, not only two, but all the important ideas of its poem or picture, and while it works with any one of them, it is at the same instant working with and modifying all in their relations to it, never losing sight of their bearings on each other; as the motion of a snake's body goes through all parts at once, and its volition acts at the same instant in coils that go contrary ways.

---

* Elements of Chemistry, by the late Edward Turner, M.D. Part II., Sec. IV.

This faculty is indeed something that looks as if man were made after the image of God. It is inconceivable, admirable, altogether divine ; and yet wonderful as it may seem, it is palpably evident that no less an operation is necessary for the production of any great work, for, by the definition of unity of membership, (the essential characteristic of greatness,) not only certain couples or groups of parts, but *all* the parts of a noble work must be separately imperfect ; each must imply, and ask for all the rest, and the glory of every one of them must consist in its relation to the rest, neither while so much as one is wanting can any be right. And it is evidently impossible to conceive in each separate feature, a certain want or wrongness which can only be corrected by the other features of the picture, (not by one or two merely, but by all,) unless together with the want, we conceive also of what is wanted, that is of all the rest of the work or picture. Hence Fuseli :—

"Second thoughts are admissible in painting and poetry only as dressers of the first conception ; no great idea was ever formed in fragments."

"He alone can conceive and compose who sees the whole at once before him."

§ 10. Its limits.

There is, however, a limit to the power of all human imagination. When the relations to be observed are absolutely necessary, and highly complicated, the mind cannot grasp them, and the result is a total deprivation of all power of imagination associative in such matter. For this reason, no human mind has ever conceived a new animal. For as it is evident that in an animal, every part implies all the rest ; that is, the form of the eye involves the form of the brow and nose, these the form of the forehead and lip, these of the head and chin, and so on, so that it is physically impossible to conceive of any one of these members, unless we conceive the relation it bears to the whole animal ; and as this relation is necessary, certain, and complicated, allowing of no license or inaccuracy, the intellect utterly fails under the load, and is reduced to mere composition, putting the bird's wing on men's shoulders, or half the human body to half the horse's, in doing which there is no action of imagination, but only of fancy ; though in the treatment and contemplation of the compound form there may be much imagination, as we shall presently see. (Chap. III. § 30.)

§ 11. How manifested in treatment of uncertain relations. Its deficiency illustrated.

The matter, therefore, in which associative imagination can be shown is that which admits of great license and variety of arrangements, and in which a certain amount of relation only is required ; as especially in the elements of landscape painting, in which best it may be illustrated.

When an unimaginative painter is about to draw a tree, (and we will suppose him, for better illustration of the point in question, to have good feeling and correct knowledge of the nature of trees,) he probably lays on his paper such a general form as he knows to be characteristic of the tree to be drawn, and such as he believes will fall in agreeably with the other masses of his picture, which we will suppose partly prepared. When this form is set down, he assuredly finds it has done something he did not intend it to do. It has mimicked some prominent line, or overpowered some necessary mass. He begins pruning and changing, and after several experiments, succeeds in obtaining a form which does no material mischief to any other. To this form he proceeds to attach a trunk, and having probably a received notion or rule (for the unimaginative painter never works without a principle) that tree trunks ought to lean first one way and then the other as they go up, and ought not to stand under the middle of the tree, he sketches a serpentine form of requisite propriety ; when it has gone up far enough, that is till it begins to look disagreeably long, he will begin to ramify it, and if there be another tree in the picture with two large branches, he knows that this, by all laws of composition, ought to have three or four, or some different number ; one because he knows that if three or four branches start from the same point they will look formal, therefore he makes them start from points one above another, and because equal distances are improper, therefore they shall start at unequal distances. When they are fairly started, he knows they must undulate or go backwards and forwards, which accordingly he makes them do at random; and because he knows that all forms ought to be contrasted, therefore he makes one bend down while the other three go up. The three that go up he knows must not go up without interfering with each other, and so he makes two of them cross. He thinks it also proper that there should be variety of character in them, so he makes the one that bends down graceful and flexible, and of the two that cross, he splinters one and makes a stump of it. He repeats the process among the more complicated minor boughs, until coming to the smallest, he thinks farther care unnecessary, but draws them freely, and by chance. Having to put on the foliage, he will make it flow properly in the direction of the tree's growth, he will make all the extremities graceful, but will be grievously plagued by finding them come all alike, and at last will be obliged to spoil a number of them altogether, in order to obtain opposition. They will not, however, be united in this their spoliation, but will remain uncomfortably separate and individually ill-tempered. He consoles himself by the reflection that it is unnatural for all of them to be equally perfect.

§ 12. Laws of art, the safeguard of the unimaginative,

Now I suppose that through the whole of this process he has been able to refer to his definite memory or conception of nature for every one of the fragments he has successively added, that the details, color, fractures, insertions, etc., of his boughs, are all either actual recollections or based on secure knowledge of the tree, (and herein I allow far more than is commonly the case with unimaginative painters.) But as far as the process of combination is concerned, it is evident that from beginning to end his laws have been his safety, and his plague has been his liberty. He has been compelled to work at random, or under the guidance of feeling only, whenever there was anything left to his own decision. He has never been decided in anything except in what he *must* or *must not* do. He has walked as a drunken man on a broad road, his guides are the hedges; and between these limits, the broader the way, the worse he gets on.

§ 13. Are by the imaginative painter despised. Tests of imagination.

The advance of the imaginative artist is precisely the reverse of this. He has no laws. He defies all restraint, and cuts down all hedges. There is nothing within the limits of natural possibility that he dares not do, or that he allows the necessity of doing. The laws of nature he knows, these are to him no restraint. They are his own nature. All other laws or limits he sets at utter defiance, his journey is over an untrodden and pathless plain. But he sees his end over the waste from the first, and goes straight at it, never losing sight of it, nor throwing away a step. Nothing can stop him, nothing turn him aside ; falcons and lynxes are of slow and uncertain sight compared with his. He saw his tree, trunk, boughs, foliage and all, from the first moment ; not only the tree but the sky behind it ; not only that tree or sky, but all the other great features of his picture : by what intense power of instantaneous selection and amalgamation cannot be explained, but by this it may be proved and tested, that if we examine the tree of the unimaginative painter, we shall find that on removing any part or parts of it, the rest will indeed suffer, as being deprived of the proper development of a tree, and as involving a blank space that wants occupation ; but the portions left are not made discordant or disagreeable. They are absolutely and in themselves as valuable as they can be, every stem is a perfect stem, and every twig a graceful twig, or at least as perfect and as graceful as they were before the removal of the rest. But if we try the same experiment on the imaginative painter's work, and break off the merest stem or twig of it, it all goes to pieces like a Prince Rupert's drop. There is not so much as a seed of it but it lies on the tree's life, like the grain upon the tongue of Chaucer's sainted child. Take it away, and the boughs will sing to us no longer. All is dead and cold.

§ 14. The monotony of unimaginative treatment.

This then is the first sign of the presence of real imagination as opposed to composition. But here is another not less important.

We have seen that as each part is selected and fitted by the unimaginative painter, he renders it, in itself, as beautiful as he is able. If it be ugly, it remains so, he is incapable of correcting it by the addition of another ugliness, and therefore he chooses all his features as fair as they may be (at least if his object be beauty.) But a small proportion only of the ideas he has at his disposal will reach his standard of absolute beauty. The others will be of no use to him, and among those which he permits himself to use, there will be so marked a family likeness, that he will be more and more cramped, as his picture advances, for want of material, and tormented by multiplying resemblances, unless disguised by some artifice of light and shade or other forced difference, and with all the differences he can imagine, his tree will yet show a sameness and sickening repetition in all its parts, and all his trees will be like one another, except so far as one leans east and another west, one is broadest at the top and another at the bottom, while through all this insipid repetition, the means by which he forces contrast, dark boughs opposed to light, rugged to smooth, etc., will be painfully evident, to the utter destruction of all dignity and repose.

§ 15. Imagination never repeats itself.

The imaginative work is necessarily the absolute opposite of all this. As all its parts are imperfect, and as there is an unlimited supply of imperfection, (for the ways in which things may be wrong are infinite,) the imagination is never at a loss, nor ever likely to repeat itself; nothing comes amiss to it, but whatever rude matter it receives, it instantly so arranges that it comes right; all things fall into their place and appear in that place perfect, useful, and evidently not to be spared, so that of its combinations there is endless variety, and every intractable and seemingly unavailable fragment that we give to it, is instantly turned to some brilliant use, and made the nucleus of a new group of glory; however poor or common the gift, it will be thankful for it, treasure it up, and pay in gold, and it has that life in it and fire, that wherever it passes, among the dead bones and dust of things, behold a shaking, and the bones come together, bone to his bone.

And now we find what noble sympathy and unity there is between the imaginative and theoretic faculties. Both agree in this, that they reject nothing, and are thankful for all; but the theoretic faculty takes out of everything that which is beautiful, while the imaginative faculty takes hold of the very imperfections which the theoretic rejects, and by means of these angles and roughnesses, it joints and bolts the separate stones into a mighty temple, wherein the theoretic faculty in its turn, does deepest homage. Thus sympathetic in their desires, harmoniously diverse in their operation, each working for the other with what the other needs not, all things external to man are by one or other turned to good.

§ 16. Relation of the imaginative faculty to the theoretic.

Now we have hitherto, for the sake of clearness, opposed the total absence of imagination to the perfect presence of it, in order to make the difference between composition and imagination thoroughly understood. But if we are to give examples of either the want or the presence of the power, it is necessary to note the circumstances by which both are modified. In the first place, few artists of any standing are totally devoid of this faculty, some small measure of it most of them possess, though of all the forms of intellect, this, and its sister, penetrative imagination, are the rarest and most precious; but few painters have reached eminence without some leaven of it, whether it can be increased by practice I doubt. On the other hand, fewer still are possessed of it in very high degree, and even with the men of most gigantic power in this respect, of whom, I think, Tintoret stands far the head, there are evident limits to its exercise, and portions to be found in their works that have not been included in the original grasp of them, but have been suggested and incorporated during their progress, or added in decoration; and with the great mass of painters there are frequent flaws and failures in the conception, so that, when they intend to produce a perfect work they throw their thought into different experimental forms, and decorate it and discipline it long before realizing it, so that there is a certain amount of mere composition in the most imaginative works; and a grain or two of imagination commonly in the most artificial. And again,

§ 17. Modification of its manifestation.

whatever portions of a picture are taken honestly and without alteration from nature, have, so far as they go, the look of imagination, because all that nature does is imaginative, that is, perfect as a whole, and made up of imperfect features; so that the painter of the meanest imaginative power may yet do grand things, if he will keep to strict portraiture, and it would be well if all artists were to endeavor to do so, for if they have imagination, it will force its way in spite of them, and show itself in their every stroke, and if not, they will not get it by leaving nature, but only sink into nothingness.

§ 18. Instances of absence of imagination.—Claude, Gaspar Poussin.

Keeping these points in view, it is interesting to observe the different degrees and relations of the imagination, as accompanied with more or less feeling or desire of harmony, vigor of conception, or constancy of reference to truth. Of men of name, perhaps Claude is the best instance of a want of imagination, nearly total, borne out by painful but untaught study of nature, and much feeling for abstract beauty of form, with none whatever for harmony of expression. In Gaspar Poussin, we have the same want of imagination disguised by more masculine qualities of mind, and grander reachings after sympathy. Thus in the sacrifice of Isaac in our own gallery, the spirit of the composition is solemn and unbroken; it would have been a grand picture if the forms of the mass of foliage on the right, and of the clouds in the centre, had not been hoplessly unimaginative. The stormy wind of the picture of Dido and Eneas blows loudly through its leaves, but the total want of invention in the cloud forms bears it down beyond redemption. The foreground tree of the La Riccia (compare Part II. Sec. VI. Chap. I., § 6.) is another characteristic instance of absolute nullity of imagination.

§ 19. Its presence.—Salvator, Nicolo Poussin, Titian, Tintoret.

In Salvator, the imagination is vigorous, the composition dexterous and clever, as in the St. Jerome of the Brera Gallery, the Diogenes of the Pitti, and the pictures of the Guadagni palace. All are rendered valueless by coarseness of feeling and habitual non-reference to nature.

All the landscape of Nicolo Poussin is imaginative, but the development of the power in Tintoret and Titian is so unapproachably intense that the mind unwillingly rests elsewhere. The four landscapes which occur to me as the most magnificently characteristic are, first, the Flight into Egypt, of the Scuola di San Rocco (Tintoret ;) secondly, the Titian of the Camuccini collection at Rome, with the figures by John Bellini ; thirdly, Titian's St. Jerome, in the Brera Gallery at Milan ; and fourthly, the St. Pietro Martire, which I name last, in spite of its importance, because there is something unmeaning and unworthy of Titian about the undulation of the trunks, and the upper part of it is destroyed by the intrusion of some dramatic clouds of that species which I have enough described in our former examination of the central cloud region, § 13.

I do not mean to set these four works above the rest of the landscape of these masters ; I name them only because the landscape is in them prominent and characteristic. It would be well to compare with them the other backgrounds of Tintoret in the Scuola, especially that of the Temptation and the Agony in the Garden, and the landscape of the two large pictures in the church of La Madonna dell' Orto.

§ 20. And Turner. But for immediate and close illustration, it is perhaps best to refer to a work more accessible, the Cephalus and Procris of Turner, in Liber Studiorum.

I know of no landscape more purely or magnificently imaginative or bearing more distinct evidence of the relative and simultaneous conception of the parts. Let the reader first cover with his hand the two trunks that rise against the sky on the right, and ask himself how any termination of the central mass so *ugly* as the straight trunk which he will then painfully see, could have been conceived or admitted without simultaneous conception of the trunks he has taken away on the right ? Let him again conceal the whole central mass, and leave these two only, and again ask himself whether anything so ugly as that bare trunk in the shape of a Y, could have been admitted without reference to the central mass ?

Then let him remove from this trunk its two arms, and try the effect; let him again remove the single trunk on the extreme right; then let him try the third trunk without the excrescence at the bottom of it; finally, let him conceal the fourth trunk from the right, with the slender boughs at the top; he will find in each case that he has destroyed a feature on which everything else depends, and if proof be required of the vital power of still smaller features, let him remove the sunbeam that comes through beneath the faint mass of trees on the hill in the distance. *

It is useless to enter into farther particulars; the reader may be left to his own close examination of this and of the other works of Turner, in which he will always find the associative imagination developed in the most profuse and marvellous modes, especially in the drawing of foliage and skies, in both of which the presence or absence of the associative power may best be tested in all artists. I have, however, confined my present illustrations chiefly to foliage, because other operations of the imagination besides the associative, interfere extensively in the treatment of sky.

§ 21. The due function of Associative imagination with respect to nature.

There remains but one question to be determined relating to this faculty, what operation, namely, supposing it possessed in high degree, it has or ought to have in the artist's treatment of natural scenery.

I have just said that nature is always imaginative, but it does not follow that her imagination is always of high subject, or that the imagination of all the parts is of a like and sympathetic kind; the boughs of every bramble bush are imaginatively arranged, so are those of every oak and cedar; but it does not follow that there is imaginative sympathy between bramble and cedar. There are few natural scenes whose harmonies are not conceivably improvable either by banishment of some discordant point, or by addition of some sympathetic one; it constantly happens that there is a profuseness too great to be comprehended, or an inequality in

---

* This ray of light, however, has an imaginative power of another kind presently to be spoken of. Compare Chap. IV. § 18.

the pitch, meaning, and intensity of different parts. The imagination will banish all that is extraneous, it will seize out of the many threads of different feeling which nature has suffered to become entangled, one only, and where that seems thin and likely to break, it will spin it stouter, and in doing this, it never knots, but weaves in the new thread, so that all its work looks as pure and true as nature itself, and cannot be guessed from it but by its exceeding simplicity, (*known* from it, it cannot be,) so that herein we find another test of the imaginative work, that it looks always as if it had been gathered straight from nature, whereas the unimaginative shows its joints and knots, and is visibly composition.

§ 22. The sign of imaginative work is its appearance of absolute truth.

And here then we arrive at an important conclusion (though one somewhat contrary to the positions commonly held on the subject,) namely, that if anything looks unnatural, there can be no imagination in it (at least not associative.) We frequently hear works that have no truth in them, justified or elevated on the score of being imaginative. Let it be understood once for all, that imagination never designs to touch anything but truth, and though it does not follow that where there is the appearance of truth, there has been imaginative operation, of this we may be assured, that where there is appearance of falsehood, the imagination has had no hand.*

For instance, the landscape above mentioned of Titian's St. Jerome may, for aught I know, be a pure transcript of a rocky slope covered with chestnuts among his native mountains. It has all the look of a sketch from nature ; if it be not, the imagination developed in it is of the highest order ; if it be, the imagination has only acted in the suggestion of the dark sky, of the shape of the flakes of solemn cloud, and of the gleam of russet light along the distant ground.†

---

* Compare Chap. III. § 30.

† It is said at Venice that Titian took the trees of the St. Pietro Martiere out of his garden opposite Murano. I think this unlikely ; there is something about the lower trunks that has a taint of composition : the thought of the whole, however, is thoroughly fine. The backgrounds of the frescoes at Padua are also very characteristic, and the

Again, it is impossible to tell whether the two nearest trunks of the Æsacus and Hesperie of the Liber Studiorum, especially the large one on the right with the ivy, have been invented, or taken straight from nature, they have all the look of accurate portraiture. I can hardly imagine anything so perfect to have been obtained except from the real thing; but we know that the imagination must have begun to operate somewhere, we cannot tell where, since the multitudinous harmonies of the rest of the picture could hardly in any real scene have continued so inviolately sweet.

The final tests, therefore, of the work of associative imagination are its intense simplicity, its perfect harmony, and its absolute truth. It may be a harmony, majestic, or humble, abrupt, or prolonged, but it is always a governed and perfect whole, evidencing in all its relations the weight, prevalence, and universal dominion of an awful, inexplicable Power; a chastising, animating, and disposing Mind.

CHAPTER III.

OF IMAGINATION PENETRATIVE.

§ 1. Imagination penetrative is concerned not with the combining but apprehending of things.

Thus far we have been defining that combining operation of the imagination, which appears to be in a sort mechanical, yet takes place in the same inexplicable modes, whatever be the order of conception submitted to it, though I chose to illustrate it by its dealings with mere matter before taking cognizance of any nobler subjects of imagery. We must now examine the dealing of the imagination with its separate conceptions, and endeavor to understand not only its principles of selection, but its modes of apprehension with respect to what it selects.

well-known wood-cut of St. Francis receiving the stigmata, one of the mightiest of existing landscape thoughts; and yet it is pure portraiture of pine and Spanish chestnut.

§ 2. Milton's and Dante's description of flame.

When Milton's Satan first "rears from off the pool, his mighty stature," the image of Leviathan before suggested not being yet abandoned, the effect on the fire-wave is described as of the upheaved monster on the ocean stream.

> "On each hand the flames,
> Driven backwards, slope their pointing spires, and rolled
> In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale."

And then follows a fiercely restless piece of volcanic imagery:

> "As when the force
> Of subterranean wind transports a hill
> Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
> Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
> And fuell'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
> Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
> And leave a singed bottom, all involved
> With stench and smoke; such resting found the sole
> Of unblest feet."

Yet I think all this is too far detailed, and deals too much with externals; we feel rather the form of the fire-waves than their fury, we walk upon them too securely, and the fuel, sublimation, smoke, and singeing, seem to me images only of partial combustion; they vary and extend the conception, but they lower the thermometer. Look back, if you will, and add to the description the glimmering of the livid flames; the sulphurous hail and red lightning; yet altogether, however they overwhelm us with horror, fail of making us thoroughly, unendurably hot. The intense essence of flame has not been given. Now hear Dante:—

> "Feriami 'l Sole in su l'omero destro
> Che già raggiando tutto l'Occidente
> *Mutava in bianco aspetto di eilestro.*
> *Ed io* facea *con l'ombra piu rovente*
> *Parer la fiammu.*"

That is a slight touch; he has not gone to Ætna nor Pel- for fuel; but we shall not soon recover from it—he has taken our breath away and leaves us gasping. No smoke nor cinders there. Pure, white, hurtling, formless flame ; very fire crystal, we cannot make spires nor waves of it, nor divide it, nor walk on it, there is no question about singeing soles of feet. It is lambent annihilation.

§ 3. The imagination seizes always by the innermost point.

Such is always the mode in which the highest imaginative faculty seizes its materials. It never stops at crusts or ashes, or outward images of any kind, it ploughs them all aside, and plunges into the very central fiery heart, nothing else will content its spirituality, whatever semblances and various outward shows and phases its subject may possess, go for nothing, it gets within all fence, cuts down to the root, and drinks the very vital sap of that it deals with ; once there it is at liberty to throw up what new shoots it will, so always that the true juice and sap be in them, and to prune and twist them at its pleasure, and bring them to fairer fruit than grew on the old tree ; but all this pruning and twisting is work that it likes not, and often does ill ; its function and gift are the getting at the root, its nature and dignity depend on its holding things always by the heart. Take its hand from off the beating of that, and it will prophesy no longer ; it looks not in the eyes, it judges not by the voice, it describes not by outward features, all that it affirms, judges, or describes, it affirms from within.

§ 4. It acts intuitively and without reasoning.

It may seem to the reader that I am incorrect in calling this penetrating, possession-taking faculty, imagination. Be it so, the name is of little consequence ; the faculty itself, called by what name we will, I insist upon as the highest intellectual power of man. There is no reasoning in it, it works not by algebra, nor by integral calculus, it is a piercing, Pholas-like mind's tongue that works and tastes into the very rock heart, no matter what be the subject submitted to it, substance or spirit, all is alike, divided asunder, joint and marrow, whatever utmost truth, life, principle, it has laid bare, and that which has no truth, life, nor principle, dissipated into its original smoke at a touch. The whispers at men's ears it lifts into visible angels. Vials that have lain sealed in the deep sea a thousand years it unseals, and brings out of them Genii.

Every great conception of poet or painter is held and treated by this faculty. Every character that is so much as touched by men like Æschylus, Homer, Dante, or Shakspeare, is by them held by the heart; and every circumstance or sentence of their being, speaking, or seeming, is seized by process from within, and is referred to that inner secret spring of which the hold is never lost for an instant; so that every sentence, as it has been thought out from the heart, opens for us a way down to the heart, leads us to the centre, and then leaves us to gather what more we may; it is the open sesame of a huge, obscure, endless cave, with inexhaustible treasure of pure gold scattered in it: the wandering about and gathering the pieces may be left to any of us, all can accomplish that; but the first opening of that invisible door in the rock is of the imagination only.

Hence there is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful under-current of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come.

§ 5. Signs of it in language.

It is often obscure, often half told, for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation, but if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion from which we may follow out all the ways and tracks to its farthest coasts.

I think the "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante" of Francesca di Rimini, and the "He has no children" of Macduff are as fine instances as can be given, but the sign and mark of it are visible on every line of the four great men above instanced.

§ 6 Absence of imagination, how shown.

The unimaginative writer, on the other hand, as he has never pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it: if he has to paint a passion, he remembers the external signs of it, he collects expressions of it from other writers, he searches for similes, he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold, disjointed heap; but it is all faggot and no fire, the life breath is not in it, his passion has the form of the Leviathan, but it never makes the deep boil, he fastens us all at anchor in the scaly rind of it, our sympathies remain as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean.

And that virtue of originality that men so strain after, is not newness, as they vainly think, (there is nothing new,) it is only genuineness; it all depends on this single glorious faculty of getting to the spring of things and working out from that; it is the coolness, and clearness, and deliciousness of the water fresh from the fountain head, opposed to the thick, hot, unrefreshing drainage from other men's meadows.

§ 7. Distinction between imagination and fancy.

This freshness, however, is not to be taken for an infallible sign of imagination, inasmuch as it results also from a vivid operation of fancy, whose parallel function to this division of the imaginative faculty it is here necessary to distinguish.

I believe it will be found that the entirely unimaginative mind *sees* nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is therefore utterly unable, as it is blind itself, to set anything before the eyes of the reader.*

The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail.†

The imagination sees the heart and inner nature, and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail.

Take an instance. A writer with neither imagination nor fancy, describing a fair lip, does not see it, but thinks about it, and about what is said of it, and calls it well-turned, or rosy, or delicate, or lovely, or afflicts us with some other quenching and chilling epithet. Now hear fancy speak,—

> "Her lips were red, and one was thin,
> Compared with that was next her chin,
> Some bee had stung it newly."‡

---

* Compare Arist. Rhet. III. 11.

† For the distinction between fancy and simple conception, see Chap. IV. § 3.

‡ I take this and the next instance from Leigh Hunt's admirable piece of criticism, "Imagination and Fancy," which ought to be read with

The real, red, bright being of the lip is there in a moment. But it is all outside; no expression yet, no mind. Let us go a step farther with Warner, of fair Rosamond struck by Eleanor.

> "With that she dashed her on the lips
> So dyed double red;
> Hard was the heart that gave the blow,
> Soft were those lips that bled."

The tenderness of mind begins to mingle with the outside color, the imagination is seen in its awakening. Next Shelley,—

> "Lamp of life, thy lips are burning
> Through the veil that seems to hide them,
> As the radiant lines of morning
> Through thin clouds, ere they divide them."

There dawns the entire soul in that morning; yet we may stop if we choose at the image still external, at the crimson clouds. The imagination is contemplative rather than penetrative. Last, hear Hamlet,—

"Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?"

There is the essence of lip, and the full power of the imagination.

Again, compare Milton's flowers in Lycidas with Perdita's. In Milton it happens, I think, generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay.

care, and to which, though somewhat loosely arranged, I may refer for all the filling up and illustration that the subject requires. With respect to what has just been said respecting want of imagination, compare his criticism of Addison's Cato, p. 28. I cannot, however, confirm his judgment, nor admit his selection of instances, among painters: he has looked to their manner only and habitual choice of subject, without feeling their power; and has given work to the coarseness, mindlessness, and eclecticism of Guido and the Carracci, which in its poetical demand of tenderness might have foiled Pinturicchio; of dignity, Leonardo; and of color, Giorgione.

"Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies (Imagination)
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine, (Nugatory)
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,— (Fancy)
The glowing violet, (Imagination)
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine, (Fancy, vulgar
With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head, (Imagination)
And every flower that sad embroidery wears." (Mixed)

Then hear Perdita :—

"O, Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's wagon. Daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty. Violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids."

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of every flower, after having touched them all at first with that heavenly timidness, the shadow of Proserpine's; and gilded them with celestial gathering, and never stops on their spots, or their bodily shape, while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that without this bit of paper-staining would have been the most precious to us of all. "There is pansies, that's for thoughts."

§ 8. Fancy how involved with imagination.

So I believe it will be found throughout the operation of the fancy, that it has to do with the outsides of things, and is content therewith: of this there can be no doubt in such passages as that description of Mab, so often given as an illustration of it, and many other instances will be found in Leigh Hunt's work already referred to. Only some embarrassment is caused by passages in which fancy is seizing the outward signs of emotion, understanding them as such, and yet, in pursuance of her proper function, taking for her share, and for that which she chooses to dwell upon, the outside sign rather than the emotion. Note in Macbeth that brilliant instance.

> "Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
> And fan our people cold."

The outward shiver and coldness of fear is seized on, and irregularly but admirably attributed by the fancy to the drift of the banners. Compare Solomon's Song where the imagination stays not at the outside, but dwells on the fearful emotion itself?

> "Who is she that looked forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

§ 9. Fancy is never serious.

Now, if this be the prevailing characteristic of the two faculties, it is evident that certain other collateral differences will result from it. Fancy, as she stays at the externals, can never feel. She is one of the hardest hearted of the intellectual faculties, or rather one of the most purely and simply intellectual. She cannot be made serious,* no edge-tools but she will play with; whereas the imagination is in all things the reverse. She cannot be but serious; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, ever to smile. There is something in the heart of everything, if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined to laugh at. The *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* of the sea is on its surface, not in the deep.

§ 10. Want of seriousness the bar to high art at the present time.

And thus there is reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination; for, on the one hand, those who have keenest sympathy are those who look closest and pierce deepest, and hold securest; and, on the other, those who have so pierced and seen the melancholy deeps of things, are filled with the most intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. Hence, I suppose that the powers of the imagination may always be tested by accompanying tenderness of emotion, and thus, (as Byron said,) there is no tenderness like Dante's, neither any intensity nor seriousness like his, such seriousness that it is incapable of perceiving that which is commonplace or ridiculous, but fuses all down into its white-hot fire; and, on the other hand, I suppose the chief bar to the action of imagination, and stop to all greatness in this present age of ours, is its mean and shallow love of jest and jeer, so that if there be in any good and lofty work a flaw or failing, or undipped vulnerable part where sarcasm may stick or stay, it is caught at, and pointed at, and buzzed about, and fixed upon, and stung into, as a recent wound is by flies, and nothing is ever taken seriously nor as it was meant, but always, if it may be, turned the wrong way, and misunderstood; and while this is so, there is not, nor cannot be any hope of achievement of high things; men dare not open their hearts to us, if we are to broil them on a thorn-fire.

---

* Fancy, in her third function may, however, become serious, and gradually rise into imagination in doing so. Compare Chap. IV. § 5.

§ 11. Imagination is quiet; fancy, restless.

This, then, is one essential difference between imagination and fancy, and another is like it and resultant from it, that the imagination being at the heart of things, poises herself there, and is still, quiet, and brooding; comprehending all around her with her fixed look, but the fancy staying at the outside of things, cannot see them all at once, but runs hither and thither, and round and about to see more and more, bounding merrily from point to point, and glittering here and there, but necessarily always settling, if she settle at all, on a point only, never embracing the whole. And from these single points she can strike out analogies and catch resemblances, which, so far as the point she looks at is concerned, are true, but would be false, if she could see through to the other side. This, however, she cares not to do, the point of contact is enough for her, and even if there be a gap left between the two things and they do not quite touch, she will spring from one to the other like an electric spark, and be seen brightest in her leaping.

§ 12. The detailing operation of fancy.

Now these differences between the imagination and the fancy hold, not only in the way they lay hold of separate conceptions, but even in the points they occupy of time, for the fancy loves to run hither and thither in time, and to follow long chains of circumstances from link to link; but the imagination, if it may, gets holds of a moment or link in the middle that implies all the rest, and fastens there. Hence Fuseli's aphorism, "Invention never suffers the action to expire, nor the spectator's fancy to consume itself in preparation, or stagnate into repose. It neither begins from the egg, nor coldly gathers the remains."

In Retsch's illustrations to Schiller's Kampf mit dem Drachen, we have an instance, miserably feeble indeed, but characteristic, and suited to our present purpose, of the detailing, finishing action of the fancy. The dragon is drawn from head to tail, vulture eyes, serpent teeth, forked tongue, fiery crest, armor, claws and coils as grisly as may be ; his den is drawn, and all the dead bones in it, and all the savage forest-country about it far and wide ; we have him from the beginning of his career to the end, devouring, rampant, victorious over whole armies, gorged with death ; we are present at all the preparations for his attack, see him receive his death-wound, and our anxieties are finally becalmed by seeing him lie peaceably dead on his back.

§ 13. And suggestive, of the imagination.

All the time we have never got into the dragon heart, we have never once felt real pervading horror, nor sense of the creature's being ; it is throughout nothing but an ugly composition of claw and scale. Now take up Turner's Jason, Liber Studiorum, and observe how the imagination can concentrate all this, and infinitely more, into one moment. No far forest country, no secret paths, nor cloven hills, nothing but a gleam of pale horizontal sky, that broods over pleasant places far away, and sends in, through the wild overgrowth of the thicket, a ray of broken daylight into the hopeless pit. No flaunting plumes nor brandished lances, but stern purpose in the turn of the crestless helmet, visible victory in the drawing back of the prepared right arm behind the steady point. No more claws, nor teeth, nor manes, nor stinging tails. We have the dragon, like everything else, by the middle. We need see no more of him. All his horror is in that fearful, slow, grinding upheaval of the single coil. Spark after spark of it, ring after ring, is sliding into the light, the slow glitter steals along him step by step, broader and broader, a lighting of funeral lamps one by one, quicker and quicker ; a moment more, and he is out upon us, all crash and blaze among those broken trunks ;—but he will be nothing then to what he is now.

§ 14. This suggestiveness how opposed to vacancy.

Now, it is necessary here very carefully to distinguish between that character of the work which depends on the imagination of the beholder, and that which results from the imagination of the artist, for a work is often called imaginative when it merely leaves room for the action of the imagination ; whereas though nearly all imaginative works do this, yet it may be done also by works that have in them no imagination at all. A few shapeless scratches or accidental stains on a wall ; or the forms of clouds, or any other complicated accidents, will set the imagination to work to coin something out of them, and all paintings in which there is much gloom or mystery, possess therein a certain sublimity owing to the play given to the beholder's imagination, without, necessarily, being in the slightest degree imaginative themselves. The vacancy of a truly imaginative work results not from absence of ideas, or incapability of grasping and detailing them, but from the painter having told the whole pith and power of his subject and disdaining to tell more, and the sign of this being the case is, that the imagination of the beholder is forced to act in a certain mode, and feels itself overpowered and borne away by that of the painter, and not able to defend itself, nor go which way it will, and the value of the work depends on the truth, authority, and inevitability of this suggestiveness, and on the absolute right choice of the critical moment. Now observe in this work of Turner's, that the whole value of it depends on the character of curve assumed by the serpent's body ; for had it been a mere semicircle, or gone down in a series of smaller coils, it would have been in the first case, ridiculous, as false and unlike a serpent, and in the second, disgusting, nothing more than an exaggerated viper, but it is that *coming straight* at the right hand which suggests the drawing forth of an enormous weight, and gives the bent part its springing look, that frightens us. Again, remove the light trunk * on the left, and observe how useless all the gloom of the picture would have been, if this trunk had not given it depth and *hollowness.* Finally and chiefly, observe that the painter is not satisfied even with all the suggestiveness thus obtained, but to make sure of us, and force us, whether we will or no, to walk his way, and not ours, the trunks of the trees on the right are all cloven into yawning and writhing heads and bodies, and alive with dragon energy all about us, note especially the nearest with its gaping jaws and claw-like branch at the seeming shoulder ; a kind of suggestion which in itself is not imaginative, but merely fanciful, (using the term fancy in that third sense not yet explained, corresponding to the third office of imagination ;) but it is imaginative in its present use and application, for the painter addresses thereby that morbid and fearful condition of mind which he has endeavored to excite in the spectator, and which in reality would have seen in every trunk and bough, as it penetrated into the deeper thicket, the object of its terror.

§ 15. Imagination addresses itself to imagination.

It is nevertheless evident, that however suggestive the work or picture may be, it cannot have effect unless we are ourselves both watchful of its very hint, and capable of understanding and carrying it out, and although I think that this power of continuing or accepting the direction of feeling given is less a peculiar gift, like that of the original seizing, than a faculty dependent on attention, and improvable by cultivation ; yet, to a certain extent, the imaginative work will not, I think, be rightly esteemed except by a mind of some corresponding power ; not but that there is an intense enjoyment in minds of feeble yet light conception in the help and food they get from those of stronger thought ; but a certain imaginative susceptibility is at any rate necessary, and above all things, earnestness and feeling, so that assuredly a work of high conceptive dignity will be always incomprehensible and valueless except in those who go to it in earnest and give it time; and this is peculiarly the case when the imagination acts not merely on the immediate subject, nor in giving a fanciful and peculiar character to prominent objects, as we have just seen, but busies itself throughout in expressing occult and far-sought sympathies in every minor detail, of which action the most sublime instances are found in the works of Tintoret, whose intensity of imagination is such that there is not the commonest subject to which he will not attach a range of suggestiveness almost limitless, nor a stone, leaf, or shadow, nor anything so small, but he will give it meaning and oracular voice.

---

* I am describing from a proof : in bad impressions this trunk is darkened.

Instances from the works of Tintoret.

In the centre of the gallery at Parma, there is a canvas of Tintoret's, whose sublimity of conception and grandeur of color are seen in the highest perfection, by their opposition to the morbid and vulgar sentimentalism of Correggio. It is an Entombment of Christ, with a landscape distance, of whose technical composition and details I shall have much to say hereafter, at present I speak only of the thought it is intended to convey. An ordinary or unimaginative painter would have made prominent, among his objects of landscape, such as might naturally be supposed to have been visible from the sepulchre, and shown with the crosses of Calvary, some portion of Jerusalem, or of the Valley of Jehoshaphat. But Tintoret has a far higher aim. Dwelling on the peculiar force of the event before him, as the fulfilment of the final prophecy respecting the passion, "He made his grave with the wicked and with the *rich* in his death," he desires to direct the mind of the spectator to this receiving of the body of Christ, in its contrast with the houseless birth and the desert life. And, therefore, behind the ghastly tomb-grass that shakes its black and withered blades above the rocks of the sepulchre, there is seen, not the actual material distance of the spot itself, (though the crosses are shown faintly,) but that to which the thoughtful spirit would return in vision, a desert place, where the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have

§ 16. The Entombment.

nests, and against the barred twilight of the melancholy sky are seen the mouldering beams and shattered roofing of a ruined cattle-shed, the canopy of the nativity.

§ 17. The Annunciation.

Let us take another instance. No subject has been more frequently or exquisitely treated by the religious painters than that of the Annunciation, though as usual, the most perfect type of its pure ideal has been given by Angelico, and by him with the most radiant consummation (so far as I know) in a small reliquary in the sacristy of St^{a}. Maria Novella. The background there, however, is altogether decorative; but in the fresco of the corridor of St. Mark's, the concomitant circumstances are of exceeding loveliness. The Virgin sits in an open loggia, resembling that of the Florentine church of L'Annunziata. Before her is a meadow of rich herbage, covered with daisies. Behind her is seen through the door at the end of the loggia, her chamber with its single grated window, through which a star-light beam of light falls into the silence. All is exquisite in feeling, but not inventive nor imaginative. Severe would be the shock and painful the contrast, if we could pass in an instant from that pure vision to the wild thought of Tintoret. For not in meek reception of the adoring messenger, but startled by the rush of his horizontal and rattling wings, the virgin sits, not in the quiet loggia, not by the green pasture of the restored soul, but houseless, under the shelter of a palace vestibule ruined and abandoned, with the noise of the axe and the hammer in her ears, and the tumult of a city round about her desolation. The spectator turns away at first, revolted, from the central object of the picture, forced painfully and coarsely forward, a mass of shattered brickwork, with the plaster mildewed away from it, and the mortar mouldering from its seams; and if he look again, either at this or at the carpenter's tools beneath it, will perhaps see in the one and the other, nothing more than such a study of scene as Tintoret could but too easily obtain among the ruins of his own Venice, chosen to give a coarse explanation of the calling and the condition of the husband of Mary. But there is more meant than this. When he looks at the composition of the picture, he will find the whole symmetry of it depending on a narrow line of light, the edge of a carpenter's square, which connects these unused tools with an object at the top of the brickwork, a white stone, four square, the corner-stone of the old edifice, the base of its supporting column. This, I think, sufficiently explains the typical character of the whole. The ruined house is the Jewish dispensation, that obscurely arising in the dawning of the sky is the Christian ; but the corner-stone of the old building remains, though the builder's tools lie idle beside it, and the stone which the builders refused is become the Headstone of the corner.

In this picture, however, the force of the thought hardly atones for the painfulness of the scene and the turbulence of its feeling. The power of the master is more strikingly shown in his treatment of a subject which, however important, and however deep in its meaning, supplies not to the ordinary painter material enough ever to form a picture of high interest ; the Baptism of Christ. From the purity of Giotto to the intolerable, inconceivable brutality of Salvator,* every order of feeling has been displayed in its treatment ; but I am aware of no single case, except this of which I am about to speak, in which it has formed an impressive picture.

§ 18. The Baptism of Christ. Its treatment by various painters.

Giotto's, in the Academy of Florence, engraved in the series just published, (Galleria delle belle Arti,) is one of the most touching I know, especially in the reverent action of the attendant angels, and Leonardo's angel in that of Andrea del Verrocchio is very beautiful, but the event is one whose character and importance are ineffable upon the features : the descending dove hardly affects us, because its constant symbolical occurrence hardens us, and makes us look on it as a mere type or letter, instead of the actual presence of the Spirit; and by all the sacred painters the power that might be put into the landscape is lost, for though their use of foliage and distant sky or mountain is usually very admirable, as we shall see in the fifth chapter, yet they cannot deal with near water or rock, and the hexagonal and basaltic protuberances of their river shore are I think too painful to be endured even by the most acceptant mind, as eminently in that of Angelico, in the Vita di Christo, which, as far as I can judge, is a total failure in action, expression, and all else; and in general it is in this subject especially, that the greatest painters show their weakness. For this reason, I suppose, and feeling the difficulty of it, Tintoret has thrown into it his utmost strength, and it becomes noble in his hands by his most singularly imaginative expression, not only of the immediate fact, but of the whole train of thought of which it is suggestive; and by his considering the baptism not only as the submission of Christ to the fulfilment of all righteousness, but as the opening of the earthly struggle with the prince of the powers of the air, which instantly beginning in the temptation, ended only on the cross.

---

* The picture is in the Guadagni palace. It is one of the most important landscapes Salvator ever painted. The figures are studied from street beggars. On the one side of the river, exactly opposite the point where the Baptism of Christ takes place, the painter, with a refinement of feeling peculiarly his own, has introduced some ruffians stripping off their shirts to bathe. He is fond of this incident. It occurs again in one of the marines of the Pitti palace, with the additional interest of a foreshortened figure, swimming on its back, feet foremost, exactly in the stream of light to which the eye is principally directed.

§ 19. By Tintoret.

The river flows fiercely under the shadow of a great rock. From its opposite shore, thickets of close, gloomy foliage rise against the rolling chasm of heaven, through which breaks the brightness of the descending Spirit. Across these, dividing them asunder, is stretched a horizontal floor of flaky cloud, on which stand the hosts of heaven. Christ kneels upon the water, and does not sink; the figure of St. John is indistinct, but close beside his raised right arm there is a spectre in the black shade; the fiend, harpy-shaped, hardly seen, glares down upon Christ with eyes of fire, waiting his time. Beneath this figure there comes out of the mist a dark hand, the arm unseen, extended to a net in the river, the spars of which are in the shape of a cross. Behind this the roots and under stems of the trees are cut away by the cloud, and beneath it, and through them, is seen a vision of wild, melancholy, boundless light, the sweep of the desert, and the figure of Christ is seen therein alone, with his arms lifted as in supplication or ecstacy, borne of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

There are many circumstances which combine to give to this noble work a more than usually imaginative character. The symbolical use of the net, which is the cross net still used constantly in the canals of Venice, and common throughout Italy, is of the same character as that of the carpenter's tools in the Annunciation ; but the introduction of the spectral figure is of bolder reach, and yet more, that vision of the after temptation which is expressly indicated as a subject of thought rather than of sight, because it is in a part of the scene, which in *fact* must have been occupied by the trunks of the trees whose tops are seen above ; and another circumstance completes the mystic character of the whole, that the flaky clouds which support the angelic hosts take on the right, where the light first falls upon them, the shape of the head of a fish, the well-known type both of the baptismal sacrament, and of Christ.

§ 20. The Crucifixion.

But the most exquisite instance of this imaginative power occurs in an incident in the background of the Crucifixion. I will not insult this marvellous picture by an effort at a verbal account of it. I would not whitewash it with praise, and I refer to it only for the sake of two thoughts peculiarly illustrative of the intellectual faculty immediately under discussion. In the common and most catholic treatment of the subject, the mind is either painfully directed to the bodily agony, coarsely expressed by outward anatomical signs, or else it is permitted to rest on that countenance inconceivable by man at any time, but chiefly so in this its consummated humiliation. In the first case, the representation is revolting ; in the second, inefficient, false, and sometimes blasphemous. None even of the greatest religious painters have ever, so far as I know, succeeded here ; Giotto and Angelico were cramped by the traditional treatment, and the latter especially, as before observed, is but too apt to indulge in those points of vitiated feeling which attained their worst development among the Byzantines: Perugino fails in his Christ in almost every instance (of other men than these after them we need not speak.) But Tintoret here, as in all other cases, penetrating into the root and deep places of his subject, despising all outward and bodily appearances of pain, and seeking for some means of expressing, not the rack of nerve or sinew, but the fainting of the deserted Son of God before his Eloi cry, and yet feeling himself utterly unequal to the expression of this by the countenance, has on the one hand filled his picture with such various and impetuous muscular exertion that the body of the Crucified is, by comparison, in perfect repose, and on the other has cast the countenance altogether into shade. But the agony is told by this, and by this only, that though there yet remains a chasm of light on the mountain horizon where the earthquake darkness closes upon the day, the broad and sunlike glory about the head of the Redeemer has become wan, and of the color of ashes.*

But the great painter felt he had something more to do yet. Not only that agony of the Crucified, but the tumult of the people, that rage which invoked his blood upon them and their children. Not only the brutality of the soldier, the apathy of the centurion, nor any other merely instrumental cause of the Divine suffering, but the fury of his own people, the noise against him of those for whom he died, were to be set before the eye of the understanding, if the power of the picture was to be complete. This rage, be it remembered, was one of disappointed pride; and the disappointment dated essentially from the time, when but five days before, the King of Zion came, and was received with hosannahs, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. To this time, then, it was necessary to direct the thoughts, for therein are found both the cause and the character, the excitement of, and the witness against, this madness of the people. In the shadow behind the cross, a man, riding on an ass colt, looks back to the multitude, while he points with a rod to the Christ crucified. The ass is feeding on the *remnants* of *withered palm-leaves.*

---

* This circumstance, like most that lie not at the surface, has escaped Fuseli, though his remarks on the general tone of the picture are very good, as well as his opposition of it to the treatment of Rubens. (Lecture IX.)

With this master-stroke I believe I may terminate all illustration of the peculiar power of the imagination over the feelings of the spectator, by the elevation into dignity and meaning of the smallest accessory circumstances. But I have not yet sufficiently dwelt on the fact from which this power arises, the absolute truth of statement of the central fact as it was, or must have been. Without this truth, this awful first moving principle, all direction of the feelings is useless. That which we cannot excite, it is of no use to know how to govern.

§ 21. The Massacre of innocents.

I have before alluded, Sect. I. Chap. XIV., to the painfulness of Raffaelle's treatment of the massacre of the innocents. Fuseli affirms of it that, "in dramatic gradation he disclosed all the mother through every image of pity and of terror." If this be so, I think the philosophical spirit has prevailed over the imaginative. The imagination never errs, it sees all that is, and all the relations and bearings of it, but it would not have confused the mortal frenzy of maternal terror with various development of maternal character. Fear, rage, and agony, at their utmost pitch, sweep away all character : humanity itself would be lost in maternity, the woman would become the mere personification of animal fury or fear. For this reason all the ordinary representations of this subject are, I think, false and cold : the artist has not heard the shrieks, nor mingled with the fugitives, he has sat down in his study to twist features methodically, and philosophize over insanity. Not so Tintoret. Knowing or feeling, that the expression of the human face was in such circumstances not to be rendered, and that the effort could only end in an ugly falsehood, he denies himself all aid from the features, he feels that if he is to place himself or us in the midst of that maddened multitude, there can be no time allowed for watching expression. Still less does he depend on details of murder or ghastliness of death ; there is no blood, no stabbing or cutting, but there is an awful substitute for these in the chiaroscuro. The scene is the outer vestibule of a palace, the slippery marble floor is fearfully barred across by sanguine shadows, so that our eyes seem to become bloodshot and strained with strange horror and deadly vision ; a lake of life before them, like the burning seen of the doomed Moabite on the water that came by the way of Edom ; a huge flight of stairs, without parapet, descends on the left ; down this rush a crowd of women mixed with the murderers ; the child in the arms of one has been seized by the limbs, she hurls herself over the edge, and falls head down-most, dragging the child out of the grasp by her weight ;—she will be dashed dead in a second : two others are farther in flight, they reach the edge of a deep river,—the water is beat into a hollow by the force of their plunge ;—close to us is the great struggle, a heap of the mothers entangled in one mortal writhe with each other and the swords, one of the murderers dashed down and crushed beneath them, the sword of another caught by the blade and dragged at by a woman's naked hand ; the youngest and fairest of the women, her child just torn away from a death grasp and clasped to her breast with the grip of a steel vice, falls backwards helplessly over the heap, right on the sword points ; all knit together and hurled down in one hopeless, frenzied, furious abandonment of body and soul in the effort to save. Their shrieks ring in our ears till the marble seems rending around us, but far back, at the bottom of the stairs, there is something in the shadow like a heap of clothes. It is a woman, sitting quiet,—quite quiet—still as any stone, she looks down steadfastly on her dead child, laid along on the floor before her, and her hand is pressed softly upon her brow.

§ 22. Various works in the Scuola di San Rocco.

This, to my mind, is the only imaginative ; that is, the only true, real, heartfelt representation of the being and actuality of the subject in existence.* I should exhaust the patience of the reader if I were to dwell at length on the various stupendous developments of the imagination of Tintoret in the Scuola di San Rocco alone. I would fain join a while in that solemn pause of the journey into Egypt, where the silver boughs of the shadowy trees lace with their tremulous lines the alternate folds of fair clouds, flushed by faint crimson light, and lie across the streams of blue between those rosy islands, like the white wakes of wandering ships ; or watch beside the sleep of the disciples among those massy leaves that lie so heavily on the dead of the night beneath the descent of the angel of the agony, and toss fearfully above the motion of the torches as the troop of the betrayer emerges out of the hollows of the olives ; or wait through the hour of accusing beside the judgment seat of Pilate; where all is unseen, unfelt, except the one figure that stands with its head bowed down, pale like a pillar of moonlight, half bathed in the glory of the Godhead, half wrapt in the whiteness of the shroud. Of these and all the other thoughts of indescribable power that are now fading from the walls of those neglected chambers, I may perhaps endeavor at some future time to preserve some image and shadow more faithfully than by words ; but I shall at present terminate our series of illustrations by reference to a work of less touching, but more tremendous appeal, the Last Judgment in the Church of Santa Maria dell' Orto. In this subject, almost all realizing or local statement had been carefully avoided by the most powerful painters, they judging it better to represent its chief circumstances as generic thoughts, and present them to the mind in a typical or abstract form. In the judgment of Angelico the treatment is purely typical, a long Campo Santo, composed of two lines of graves, stretches away into the distance ; on the left side of it rise the condemned ; on the right the just. With Giotto and Orcagna, the conception, though less rigid, is equally typical, no effort being made at the suggestion of space, and only so much ground represented as is absolutely necessary to support the near figures and allow space for a few graves. Michael Angelo in no respect differs in his treatment, except that his

---

* Note the shallow and uncomprehending notice of this picture by Fuseli. His description of the treatment of it by other painters is however, true, terse, and valuable.

§ 23. The Last Judgment. How treated by various painters.

figures are less symmetrically grouped, and a greater conception of space is given by their various perspective. No interest is attached to his background in itself. Fra Bartolomeo, never able to grapple with any species of sublimity except that of simple religious feeling, fails most signally in this mighty theme.* His group of the dead, including not more than ten or twelve figures, occupies the foreground only, behind them a vacant plain extends to the foot of a cindery volcano, about whose mouth several little black devils like spiders are skipping and crawling. The judgment of quick and dead is thus expressed as taking place in about a rood square, and on a dozen of people at a time ; the whole of the space and horizon of the sky and land being left vacant, and the presence of the Judge of all the earth made more finite than the sweep of a whirlwind or a thunder-storm.

§ 24. By Tintoret.

By Tintoret only has this unmanageable event been grappled with in its verity ; not typically nor symbolically, but as they may see it who shall not sleep, but be changed. Only one traditional circumstance he has received with Dante and Michael Angelo, the boat of the condemned ; but the impetuosity of his mind bursts out even in the adoption of this image, he has not stopped at the scowling ferryman of the one nor at the sweeping blow and demon dragging of the other, but, seized Hylas-like by the limbs, and tearing up the earth in his agony, the victim is dashed into his destruction ; nor is it the sluggish Lethe, nor the fiery lake that bears the cursed vessel, but the oceans of the earth and the waters of the firmament gathered into one white, ghastly cataract, the river of the wrath of God, roaring down into the gulf where the world has melted with its fervent heat, choked with the ruin of nations, and the limbs of its corpses tossed out of its whirling, like water-wheels. Bat like, out of the holes and caverns and shadows of the earth, the bones gather, and the clay-heaps heave, rattling and adhering into half-kneaded anatomies, that crawl, and startle, and struggle up among the putrid weeds, with the clay clinging to their clotted hair, and their heavy eyes sealed by the earth darkness yet, like his of old who went his way unseeing to Siloam Pool; shaking off one by one the dreams of the prison-house, hardly hearing the clangor of the trumpets of the armies of God, blinded yet more, as they awake, by the white light of the new Heaven, until the great vortex of the four winds bears up their bodies to the judgment seat: the firmament is all full of them, a very dust of human souls, that drifts, and floats, and falls in the interminable, inevitable light; the bright clouds are darkened with them as with thick snow, currents of atom life in the arteries of heaven, now soaring up slowly, farther, and higher, and higher still, till the eye and the thought can follow no farther, borne up, wingless, by their inward faith and by the angel powers invisible, now hurled in countless drifts of horror before the breath of their condemnation.

---

* Fresco in an out-house of the Ospedale St^{a}. Maria Nuova at Florence.

§ 25. The Imaginative verity, how distinguished from realism.

Now, I wish the reader particularly to observe throughout all these works of Tintoret, the distinction of the imaginative verity from falsehood on the one hand, and from realism on the other. The power of every picture depends on the penetration of the imagination into the TRUE nature of the thing represented, and on the utter scorn of the imagination for all shackles and fetters of mere external fact that stand in the way of its suggestiveness. In the Baptism it cuts away the trunks of trees as if they were so much cloud or vapor, that it may exhibit to the thought the completed sequency of the scene;* in the Massacre, it covers the marble floor with visionary light, that it may strike terror into the spectator without condescending to butchery; it defies the bare fact, but creates in him the fearful feeling; in the Crucifixion it annihilates locality, and brings the palm-leaves to Calvary, so only that it may bear the mind to the mount of Olives, as in the entombment it brings the manger to Jerusalem, that it may take the heart to Bethlehem; and all this it does in the daring consciousness of its higher and spiritual verity, and in the entire knowledge of the fact and substance of all that it touches. The imaginary boat of the demon angel expands the rush of the visible river into the descent of irresistible condemnation ; but to make that rush and roar felt by the eye and heard by the ear, the rending of the pine branches above the cataract is taken directly from nature ; it is an abstract of Alpine storm. Hence while we are always placed face to face with whatever is to be told, there is in and beyond its reality a voice supernatural ; and that which is doubtful in the vision has strength, sinew, and assuredness, built up in it by fact.

---

* The same thing is done yet more boldly in the large composition of the ceiling; the plague of fiery serpents; a part of the host, and another sky horizon are seen through an opening in the ground.

§ 26. The imagination how manifested in sculpture.

Let us, however, still advance one step farther, and observe the imaginative power deprived of all aid from chiaroscuro, color, or any other means of concealing the frame-work of its thoughts.

It was said by Michael Angelo that " non ha l'ottimo scultore alcun concetto, Ch'un marmo solo in se non circoscriva," a sentence which, though in the immediate sense intended by the writer it may remind us a little of the indignation of Boileau's Pluto, " Il s'ensuit de la que tout ce qui se peut dire de beau, est dans les dictionnaires,—il n'y a que les paroles qui sont transposées," yet is valuable, because it shows us that Michael Angelo held the imagination to be entirely expressible in rock, and therefore altogether independent, in its own nature, of those aids of color and shade by which it is recommended in Tintoret, though the sphere of its operation is of course by these incalculably extended. But the presence of the imagination may be rendered in marble as deep, thrilling, and awful as in painting, so that the sculptor seek for the soul and govern the body thereby.

§ 27. Bandinelli, Canova, Mino da Fiesole.

Of unimaginative work, Bandinelli and Canova supply us with characteristic instances of every kind, the Hercules and Cacus of the former, and its criticism by Cellini, will occur at once to every one ; the disgusting statue now placed so as to conceal Giotto's important tempera picture in Santa Croce is a better instance, but a still more impressive lesson might be received by comparing the inanity of Canova's garland grace, and ball-room sentiment with the intense truth, tenderness, and power of men like Mino da Fiesole, whose chisel leaves many a hard edge, and despises down and dimple, but it seems to cut light and carve breath, the marble burns beneath it, and becomes transparent with very spirit. Yet Mino stopped at the human nature; he saw the soul, but not the ghostly presences about it; it was reserved for Michael Angelo to pierce deeper yet, and to see the indwelling angels. No man's soul is alone: Laocoon or Tobit, the serpent has it by the heart or the angel by the hand, the light or the fear of the spiritual things that move beside it may be seen on the body; and that bodily form with Buonaroti, white, solid, distinct material, though it be, is invariably felt as the instrument or the habitation of some infinite, invisible power. The earth of the Sistine Adam that begins to burn; the woman embodied burst of adoration from his sleep; the twelve great torrents of the Spirit of God that pause above us there, urned in their vessels of clay; the waiting in the shadow of futurity of those through whom the promise and presence of God went down from the Eve to the Mary, each still and fixed, fixed in his expectation, silent, foreseeing, faithful, seated each on his stony throne, the building stones of the word of God, building on and on, tier by tier, to the Refused one, the head of the corner; not only these, not only the troops of terror torn up from the earth by the four quartered winds of the Judgment, but every fragment and atom of stone that he ever touched became instantly inhabited by what makes the hair stand up and the words be few; the St. Matthew, not yet disengaged from his sepulchre, bound hand and foot by his grave clothes, it is left for us to loose him; the strange spectral wreath of the Florence Pieta, casting its pyramidal, distorted shadow, full of pain and death, among the faint purple lights that cross and perish under the obscure dome of St^{a}. Maria del Fiore, the white lassitude of joyous limbs, panther-like, yet passive, fainting with their own delight, that gleam among the pagan formalisms of the Uffizii, far away, showing them-

§ 28. Michael Angelo.

selves in their lustrous lightness as the waves of an Alpine torrent do by their dancing among the dead stones, though the stones be as white as they :* and finally, and perhaps more than all, those four ineffable types, not of darkness nor of day—not of morning nor evening, but of the departure and the resurrection, the twilight and the dawn of the souls of men—together with the spectre sitting in the shadow of the niche above them ;† all these, and all else that I could name of his forming, have borne, and in themselves retain and exercise the same inexplicable power—inexplicable because proceeding from an imaginative perception almost superhuman, which goes whither we cannot follow, and is where we cannot come ; throwing naked the final, deepest root of the being of man, whereby he grows out of the invisible, and holds on his God home.*

---

* The Bacchus. There is a small statue opposite it also—unfinished ; but "a spirit still."

† I would have insisted more on the ghostly vitality of this dreadful statue ; but the passage referring to it in Rogers's Italy supersedes all further description. I suppose most lovers of art know it by heart.

> " Nor then forget that chamber of the dead,
> Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
> Turned into stone, rest everlastingly ;
> Yet still are breathing, and shed round at noon
> A twofold influence,—only to be felt—
> A light, a darkness, mingling each with each ;
> Both, and yet neither. There, from age to age,
> Two ghosts are sitting on their sepulchres.
> That is the Duke Lorenzo. Mark him well.
> He meditates, his head upon his hand.
> What from beneath his helm-like bonnet scowls ?
> Is it a face, or but an eyeless skull ?
> 'Tis lost in shade ; yet, like the basilisk,
> It fascinates, and is intolerable.
> His mien is noble, most majestical !
> Then most so, when the distant choir is heard
> At morn or eve—nor fail thou to attend
> On that thrice-hallowed day, when all are there ;
> When all, propitiating with solemn songs,
> Visit the Dead. Then wilt thou feel his power ! "

It is strange that this should be the only written instance (as far as I recollect) of just and entire appreciation of Michael Angelo's spiritual power. It is perhaps owing to the very intensity of his imagination that he has been so little understood—for, as I before said, imagination can never be met by vanity, nor without earnestness. His Florentine followers saw in him an anatomist and posture-master—and art was finally destroyed by the influence over admiring idiocy of the greatest mind that art ever inspired.

---

* I have not chosen to interrupt the argument respecting the essence of the imaginative faculty by any remarks on the execution of the imaginative hand ; but we can hardly leave Tintoret and Michael Angelo without some notice of the pre-eminent power of execution exhibited by both of them, in consequence of their vigor and clearness of conception ; nor without again warning the lower artist from confounding this velocity of decision and impatience with the velocity of affectation or indolence. Every result of real imagination we have seen to be a truth of some sort ; and it is the characteristic of truth to be in some way tangible, seizable, distinguishable, and clear, as it is of falsehood to be obscure, confused, and confusing. Not but that many, if not most truths have a dark side, a side by which they are connected with mysteries too high for us,—nay, I think it is commonly but a poor and miserable truth which the human mind can walk all round, but at all events they have one side by which we can lay hold of them, and feel that they are downright adamant, and that their form, though lost in cloud here and there, is unalterable and real, and not less real and rocky because infinite, and joined on, St. Michael's mount-like to a far mainland. So then, whatever the real imagination lays hold of, as it is a truth, does not alter into anything else as the imaginative part works at it aud feels over it and finds out more of it, but comes out more and more continually, all that is found out pointing to and indicating still more behind, and giving additional stability and reality to that which is discovered already. But if it be fancy or any other form of pseudo-imagination which is at work, then that which it gets hold of may not be a truth, but only an idea, which will keep giving way as soon as we try to take hold of it and turning into something else, so that as we go on copying it, every part will be inconsistent with all that has gone before, and at intervals it will vanish altogether, and leave blanks which must be filled up by any means at hand. And in these circumstances, the painter, unable to seize his thought, because it has not substance nor bone enough to bear grasping, is liable to catch at every line that he lays down, for help and suggestion, and to be led away by it to something else, which the first effort to realize dissipates in like manner, placing another phantom in its stead, until out of the fragments of these successive phantoms he has glued together a vague, mindless, in-

§ 29. Recapitulation. The perfect function of the imagination is the intuitive perception of ultimate truth.

Now, in all these instances, let it be observed, for it is to that end alone that I have been arguing all along, that the virtue of the imagination is its reaching, by intuition and intensity of gaze, (not by reasoning, but by its authoritative opening and revealing power,) a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things. I repeat that it matters not whether the reader is willing to call this faculty imagination or no, I do not care about the name; but I would be understood when I speak of imagination hereafter, to mean

voluntary whole, a mixture of all that was trite or common in each of the successive conceptions, for that is necessarily what is first caught a heap of things with the bloom off and the chill on, laborious, unnatural, inane, with its emptiness disguised by affectation, and its tastelessness salted by extravagance.

Necessarily, from these modes of conception, three vices of execution must result; and these are necessarily found in all those parts of the work where any trust has been put in conception, and only to be avoided in portions of actual portraiture (for a thoroughly unimaginative painter can make no use of a study—all his studies are guesses and experiments, all are equally wrong, and so far felt to be wrong by himself, that he will not work by any of them, but will always endeavor to improve upon them in the picture, and so lose the use of them). These three vices of execution are then—first, feebleness of handling, owing to uncertainty of intention; secondly, intentional carelessness of handling, in the hope of getting by accident something more than was meant; and lastly, violence and haste of handling, in the effort to secure as much as possible of the obscure image of which the mind feels itself losing hold. (I am throughout, it will be observed, attributing right feeling to the unimaginative painter; if he lack this, his execution may be cool and determined, as he will set down falsehood without blushing, and ugliness without suffering.) Added to these various evidences of weakness, will be the various vices assumed for the sake of concealment; morbid refinements disguising feebleness—or insolence and coarseness to cover desperation. When the imagination is powerful, the resulting execution is of course the contrary of all this: its first steps will commonly be impetuous, in clearing its ground and getting at its first conception—as we know of Michael Angelo in his smiting his blocks into shape, (see the passage quoted by Sir Charles Clarke in the Essay on Expression, from Blaise de Vigenere,) and as it is visible in the handling of Tintoret always: as the work approaches completion, the stroke, while it remains certain and firm, because its end is always known, may frequently become slow and careful, both on account of this, the true foundation of all art which exercises eternal authority over men's minds; (all other imagination than this is either secondary and contemplative, or utterly spurious;) the base of whose authority and being is its perpetual thirst

the difficulty of following the pure lines of conception, and because there is no fear felt of the conception's vanishing before it can be realized; but generally there is a certain degree of impetuosity visible in the works of all the men of high imagination, when they are not working from a study, showing itself in Michael Angelo by the number of blocks he left unfinished, and by some slight evidences in those he completed of his having worked painfully towards the close; so that, except the Duke Lorenzo, the Bacchus of the Florentine gallery, and the Pieta of Genoa, I know not any of his finished works in which his mind is as mightily expressed as in his marble sketches; only, it is always to be observed that impetuosity or rudeness of hand is not necessarily--and, if imaginative, is never—carelessness. In the two landscapes at the end of the Scuola di San Rocco, Tintoret has drawn several large tree trunks with two strokes of his brush—one for the dark, and another for the light side; and the large rock at the foot of the picture of the Temptation is painted with a few detached touches of gray over a flat brown ground; but the touches of the tree-trunks have been followed by the mind as they went down with the most painful intensity through their every undulation; and the few gray strokes on the stone are so considered that a better stone cone could not be painted if we took a month to it: and I suppose, generally, it would be utterly impossible to give an example of execution in which less was left to accident, or in which more care was concentrated in every stroke, than the seemingly regardless and impetuous handling of this painter.

On the habit of both Tintoret and Michael Angelo to work straight forward from the block and on the canvas, without study or model, it is needless to insist; for though this is one of the most amazing proofs of their imaginative power, it is a dangerous precedent. No mode of execution ought ever to be taught to a young artist as better than another; he ought to understand the truth of what he has to do, felicitous execution will follow as a matter of course; and if he feels himself capable of getting at the right at once, he will naturally do so without reference to precedent. He ought to hold always that his duty is to attain the highest result he can,—but that no one has any business with the means or time he has taken. If it can be done quickly, let it be so done; if not, let it be done at any rate. For knowing his way he is answerable, and therefore must not walk *doubtingly;* but no one can blame him for walking *cautiously*, if the way be a narrow one, with a slip on each side. He may pause, but he must not hesitate,—and tremble, but must not vacillate.

of truth and purpose to be true. It has no food, no delight, no care, no perception, except of truth; it is forever looking under masks, and burning up mists; no fairness of form, no majesty of seeming will satisfy it; the first condition of its existence is incapability of being deceived; and though it sometimes dwells upon and substantiates the fictions of fancy, yet its own operation is to trace to their farthest limit the true laws and likelihoods even of the fictitious creation. This has been well explained by Fuseli, in his allusion to the Centaur of Zeuxis; and there is not perhaps a greater exertion of imaginative power than may be manifested in following out to their farthest limits the necessary consequences of such arbitrary combination; but let not the jests of the fancy be confounded with that after serious work of the imagination which gives them all the nervous verity and substance of which they are capable. Let not the monsters of Chinese earthenware be confounded with the Faun, Satyr, or Centaur.

§ 30. Imagination, how vulgarly understood.

How different this definition of the imagination may be from the idea of it commonly entertained among us, I can hardly say, because I have a very indistinct idea of what is usually meant by the term. I hear modern works constantly praised as being imaginative, in which I can trace no virture of any kind; but simple, slavish, unpalliated falsehood and exaggeration; I see not what merit there can be in pure, ugly, resolute fiction; it is surely easy enough to be wrong; there are many ways of being unlike nature. I understand not what virtue that is which entitles one of these ways to be called imaginative, rather than another; and I am still farther embarrassed by hearing the portions of those works called especially imaginative in which there is the most effort at minute and mechanical statement of contemptible details, and in which the artist would have been as actual and absolute in imitation as an echo, if he had known how. Against convictions which I do not understand, I cannot argue; but I may warn the artist that imagination of this strange kind, is not capable of bearing the time test; nothing of its doing ever has continued its influence over men; and if he desires to take place among the great men of older time, there is but one way for it; and one kind of imagination that will stand the immortal light: I know not how far it is by effort cultivable; but we have evidence enough before us to show in what direction that effort must be made.

§ 31. How its cultivation is dependent on the moral feelings.

We have seen (§ 10) that the imagination is in no small degree dependent on acuteness of moral emotion; in fact, all moral truth can only thus be apprehended—and it is observable, generally, that all true and deep emotion is imaginative, both in conception and expression; and that the mental sight becomes sharper with every full beat of the heart; and, therefore, all egotism, and selfish care, or regard, are in proportion to their constancy, destructive of imagination; whose play and power depend altogether on our being able to forget ourselves and enter like possessing spirits into the bodies of things about us.

§ 32. On independence of mind,

Again, as the life of imagination is in the discovering of truth, it is clear it can have no respect for sayings or opinions: knowing in itself when it has invented truly—restless and tormented except when it has this knowledge, its sense of success or failure is too acute to be affected by praise or blame. Sympathy it desires—but can do without; of opinions it is regardless, not in pride, but because it has no vanity, and is conscious of a rule of action and object of aim in which it cannot be mistaken; partly, also, in pure energy of desire and longing to do and to invent more and more, which suffer it not to suck the sweetness of praise—unless a little, with the end of the rod in its hand, and without pausing in its march. It goes straight forward up the hill; no voices nor mutterings can turn it back, nor petrify it from its purpose.*

§ 33. And on habitual reference to nature.

Finally, it is evident, that like the theoretic faculty, the imagination must be fed constantly by external nature—after the illustrations we have given, this may seem mere truism, for it is clear that to the exercise of the penetrative faculty a subject of penetration is necessary ; but I note it because many painters of powerful mind have been lost to the world by their suffering the restless writhing of their imagination in its cage to take place of its healthy and exulting activity in the fields of nature. The most imaginative men always study the hardest, and are the most thirsty for new knowledge. Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy ; but imagination is a pilgrim on the earth—and her home is in heaven. Shut her from the fields of the celestial mountains—bar her from breathing their lofty, sun-warmed air ; and we may as well turn upon her the last bolt of the tower of famine, and give the keys to the keeping of the wildest surge that washes Capraja and Gorgona.

---

* That which we know of the lives of M. Angelo and Tintoret is eminently illustrative of this temper.

CHAPTER IV.

OF IMAGINATION CONTEMPLATIVE.

§ 1. Imagination contemplative is not part of the essence, but only a habit or mode of the faculty.

We have, in the two preceding chapters, arrived at definite conclusions respecting the power and essence of the imaginative faculty. In these two acts of penetration and combination, its separating and characteristic attributes are entirely developed ; it remains for us only to observe a certain habit or mode of operation in which it frequently delights, and by which it addresses itself to our perceptions more forcibly, and asserts its presence more distinctly than in those mighty but more secret workings wherein its life consists.

In our examination of the combining imagination, we chose to assume the first or simple conception to be as clear in the absence as in the presence of the object of it. This, I suppose, is in point of fact never the case, nor is an approximation to such distinctness of conception always a characteristic of the imaginative mind. Many persons have thorough and felicitous power of drawing from memory, yet never originate a thought, nor excite an emotion.

The form in which conception actually occurs to ordinary minds appears to derive value and preciousness from that indefiniteness which we alluded to in the second chapter, (§ 2,) for there is an unfailing charm in the memory and anticipation of things beautiful, more sunny and spiritual than attaches to their presence; for with their presence it is possible to be sated, and even wearied, but with the imagination of them never; in so far that it needs some self-discipline to prevent the mind from falling into a morbid condition of dissatisfaction with all that it immediately possesses, and continual longing for things absent; and yet I think this charm is not justly to be attributed to the mere vagueness and uncertainty of the conception, except thus far, that of objects whose substantial presence was ugly or painful the sublimity and impressiveness, if there were any, is retained in the conception, while the sensual offensiveness is withdrawn; thus circumstances of horror may be safely touched in verbal description, and for a time dwelt upon by the mind, as often by Homer and Spenser, (by the latter frequently with too much grossness, as in the description of the combat of the Red-Cross Knight with Errour,) which could not for a moment be regarded or tolerated in their reality, or on canvas; and besides this mellowing and softening operation on those it retains, the conceptive faculty has the power of letting go many of them altogether out of its groups of ideas, and retaining only those where the meminisse juvabit will apply; and in this way the entire group of memories becomes altogether delightful; but of those parts of anything which are in themselves beautiful, I think the indistinctness no benefit, but that the brighter they are the better; and that the peculiar charm we feel in conception results from its grasp and blending of ideas rather than from their obscurity, for we do not usually recall, as we have seen, one part at a time only of a pleasant scene, one moment only of a happy day; but together with each single object we summon up a kind of crowded and involved shadowing forth of all the other glories with which it was associated, and into every moment we concentrate an

§ 2. The ambiguity of conception.

§ 3. Is not in itself capable of adding to the charm of fair things.

epitome of the day ; and it will happen frequently that even when the visible objects or actual circumstances are not in numbers remembered ; yet the feeling and joy of them is obtained we know not how or whence, and so with a kind of conceptive burning glass we bend the sunshine of all the day, and the fulness of all the scene upon every point that we successively seize ; and this together with more vivid action of fancy, for I think that the wilful and playful seizure of the points that suit her purpose and help her springing, whereby she is distinguished from simple conception, takes place more easily and actively with the memory of things than in presence of them. But, however this be, and I confess that there is much that I cannot satisfactorily to myself unravel with respect to the nature of simple conception ; it is evident that this agreeableness, whatever it be, is not by art attainable, for all art is in some sort realization ; it may be the realization of obscurity or indefiniteness, but still it must differ from the mere conception of obscurity and indefiniteness ; so that whatever emotions depend absolutely on imperfectness of conception, as the horror of Milton's Death, cannot be rendered by art, for art can only lay hold of things which have shape, and destroys by its touch the fearfulness or pleasurableness of those which shape have none.

§ 4. But gives to the imagination its regardant power over them.

But on this indistinctness of conception, itself comparatively valueless and unaffecting, is based the operation of the imaginative faculty with which we are at present concerned, and in which its glory is consummated ; whereby, depriving the subject of material and bodily shape, and regarding such of its qualities only as it chooses for particular purpose, it forges these qualities together in such groups and forms as it desires, and gives to their abstract being consistency and reality, by striking them as it were with the die of an image belonging to other matter, which stroke having once received, they pass current at once in the peculiar conjunction and for the peculiar value desired.

Thus, in the description of Satan quoted in the first chapter, " And like a comet burned," the bodily shape of the angel is destroyed, the inflaming of the formless spirit is alone regarded; and this, and his power of evil associated in one fearful and abstract conception are stamped to give them distinctness and permanence with the image of the comet, "that fires the length of Ophiuchus huge." Yet this could not be done, but that the image of the comet itself is in a measure indistinct, capable of awful expansion, and full of threatening and fear. Again, in his fall, the imagination binds up the thunder, the resistance, the massy prostration, separates them from the external form, and binds them together by the help of that image of the mountain half-sunk; which again would be unfit but for its own indistinctness, and for that glorious addition "with all his pines," whereby a vitality and spear-like hostility are communicated to its falling form, and the fall is marked as not utter subversion, but sinking only, the pines remaining in their uprightness, and unity, and threatening of darkness upon the descended precipice: and again in that yet more noble passage at the close of the fourth book, where almost every operation of the contemplative imagination is concentrated; the angelic squadron first gathered into one burning mass by the single expression "sharpening in mooned horns," then told out in their unity and multitude and stooped hostility, by the image of the wind upon the corn; Satan endowed with godlike strength and endurance in that mighty line, "like Teneriffe or Atlas, unremoved," with infinitude of size the next instant, and with all the vagueness and terribleness of spiritual power, by the "horror plumed," and the "*what seemed* both spear and shield."

§ 5. The third office of fancy distinguished from imagination contemplative.

The third function of fancy, already spoken of as subordinate to this of the imagination, is the highest of which she is capable; like the imagination, she beholds in the things submitted to her treatment things different from the actual; but the suggestions she follows are not in their nature essential in the object contemplated; and the images resulting, instead of illustrating, may lead the mind away from it, and change the current of contemplative feeling; for as in her operation parallel to imagination penetrative, we saw her dwelling upon external features, while the nobler sister, faculty, entered within, so now, when both, from what they see and know in their immediate object, are conjuring up images illustrative or elevatory of it, the fancy necessarily summons those of mere external relationship, and therefore of unaffecting influence; while the imagination, by every ghost she raises, tells tales about the prison-house, and therefore never loses her power over the heart, nor her unity of emotion. On the other hand, the regardant or contemplative action of fancy is in this different from, and in the nobler, than that mere seizing and likeness-catching operation we saw in her before ; that when contemplative, she verily believes in the truth of the vision she has summoned, loses sight of actuality, and beholds the new and spiritual image faithfully and even seriously ; whereas before, she summoned no spiritual image, but merely caught the vivid actuality, or the curious resemblance of the real object ; not that these two operations are separate, for the fancy passes gradually from mere vivid right of reality, and witty suggestion of likeness, to a ghostly sight of what is unreal ; and through this, in proportion as she begins to feel, she rises towards and partakes of imagination itself, for imagination and fancy are continually united, and it is necessary, when they are so, carefully to distinguish the feelingless part which is fancy's, from the sentient part, which is imagination's. Let us take a few instances. Here is fancy, first, very beautiful, in her simple capacity of likeness-catching:—

" To-day we purpose—aye, this hour we mount
To spur three leagues towards the Apennine.
Come down, we pray thee, ere the *hot sun count*
His dewy rosary on the eglantine."

Seizing on the outside resemblances of bead form, and on the slipping from their threading bough one by one, the fancy is content to lose the heart of the thing, the solemnity of prayer : or perhaps I do the glorious poet wrong in saying this, for the sense of a sun worship and orison in beginning its race, may have been in his mind ; and so far as it was so, the passage is imaginative and not fanciful. But that which most readers would accept from it, is the mere flash of the external image, in whose truth the fancy herself does not yet believe and therefore is not yet contemplative. Here, however, is fancy believing in the images she creates :—

"It feeds the quick growth of the serpent-vine,
And the dark linked ivy tangling wild
And budding, blown, or odor faded blooms,
Which *star the winds with points of colored light*
As they rain through them; and *bright golden globes*
Of fruit suspended in their own green heaven."

It is not, observe, a mere likeness that is caught here; but the flowers and fruit are entirely deprived by the fancy of their material existence, and contemplated by her seriously and faithfully as stars and worlds; yet it is only external likeness that she catches; she forces the resemblance, and lowers the dignity of the adopted image.

Next take two delicious stanzas of fancy regardant, (believing in her creations,) followed by one of heavenly imagination, from Wordsworth's address to the daisy :—

"A Nun demure—of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden—of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations.
A Queen in crown of rubies drest,
A starveling in a scanty vest,
Are all as seems to suit thee best,—
Thy appellations.

I see thee glittering from afar.
And then thou art a pretty star,—
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee.
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee.

Sweet flower—for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast.

Sweet silent creature,
That breath'st with me, in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature."

§ 6. Various instances.

Observe how spiritual, yet how wandering and playful the fancy is in the first two stanzas, and how far she flies from the matter in hand, never stopping to brood on the character of any one of the images she summons, and yet for a moment truly seeing and believing in them all; while in the last stanza the imagination returns with its deep feeling to the heart of the flower, and "*cleaves fast*" to that. Compare the operation of the imagination in Coleridge, on one of the most trifling objects that could possibly have been submitted to its action.

"The thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not:
Only that film which fluttered on the grate
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me, who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling spirit
By its own moods interprets; everywhere,
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of thought."

Lastly, observe the sweet operation of fancy regardant, in the following well-known passage from Scott, where both her beholding and transforming powers are seen in their simplicity.

"The rocky summits—split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement.—
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair,
For from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er th' unfathomable glade,

All twinkling with the dew-drop sheen,
The brier-rose fell, in streamers green,—
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs."

Let the reader refer to this passage, with its pretty tremulous conclusion above the pine tree, "where glistening streamers waved and danced," and then compare with it the following, where the imagination operates on a scene nearly similar.

"Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemm'd
The struggling brook; tall spires of windle strae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but knarled roots of ancient pines,
Branchless and blasted, clench'd with grasping roots
Th' unwilling soil. . . . .
. . . . A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly. For, *as fast years flow away,*
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white; and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs; so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. . . . .
. . . .
. . . . . . Where the pass extends
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems with its accumulated crags
To overhang the world; for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars, and descending moon,
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-colored even, and *fiery hills*
Mingling their flames with twilight on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene
In naked, and severe simplicity
Made contrast with the universe. A pine
Rock-rooted, stretch'd athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each *inconstant blast,*
Yielding one only response at each pause,
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder, and the hiss of *homeless* streams,
Mingling its solemn song.

In this last passage, the mind never departs from its solemn possession of the solitary scene, the imagination only giving weight, meaning, and strange human sympathies to all its sights and sounds.

In that from Scott,*—the fancy, led away by the outside resemblance of floating form and hue to the banners, loses the feeling and possession of the scene, and places herself in circumstances of character completely opposite to the quietness and grandeur of the natural objects ; this would have been unjustifiable, but that the resemblance occurs to the mind of the monarch, rather than to that of the poet ; and it is that, which of all others, would have been the most likely to occur at the time ; in this point of view it has high imaginative propriety. Of the same fanciful character is that transformation of the tree trunks into dragons noticed before in Turner's Jason ; and in the same way this becomes imaginative as it exhibits the effect of fear in disposing to morbid perception. Compare with it the real and high action of the imagination on the same matter in Wordsworth's Yew trees (which I consider the most vigorous and solemn bit of forest landscape ever painted) :—

> "Each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine,
> Up coiling and inveterately convolved,
> *Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks*
> *That threaten the profane.*"

It is too long to quote, but the reader should refer to it : let him note especially, if painter, that pure touch of color, "by sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged."

---

* Let it not be supposed that I mean to compare the sickly dreaming of Shelley over clouds and waves with the masculine and magnificent grasp of men and things which we find in Scott ; it only happens that these two passages are more illustrative, by the likeness of the scenery they treat, than any others I could have opposed; and that Shelley is peculiarly distinguished by the faculty of contemplative imagination. Scott's healthy and truthful feeling would not allow him to represent the benighted hunter provoked by loss of game, horse, and way at once, as indulging in any more exalted flights of imagination than those naturally consequent on the contrast between the night's lodging he expected, and that which befitted him.

In the same way, the blasted trunk on the left, in Turner's drawing of the spot where Harold fell at the battle of Hastings, takes, where its boughs first separate, the shape of the head of an arrow; this, which is mere fancy in itself, is imagination as it supposes in the spectator an excited condition of feeling dependent on the history of the spot.

§ 7. Morbid or nervous fancy.

I have been led perhaps into too great detail in illustrating these points; but I think it is of no small importance to prove how in all cases the imagination is based upon, and appeals to, a deep heart feeling; and how faithful and earnest it is in contemplation of the subject matter, never losing sight of it, or disguising it, but depriving it of extraneous and material accidents, and regarding it in its disembodied essence. I have not, however, sufficiently noted in opposition to it, that diseased action of the fancy which depends more on nervous temperament than intellectual power; and which, as in dreaming, fever, insanity, and other morbid conditions of mind, is frequently a source of daring and inventive conception; and so the visionary appearances resulting from various disturbances of the frame by passion, and from the rapid tendency of the mind to invest with shape and intelligence the active influences about it, as in the various demons, spirits, and fairies of all imaginative nations; which, however, I consider are no more to be ranked as right creations of fancy or imagination than things actually seen and heard; for the action of the nerves is I suppose the same, whether externally caused, or from within, although very grand imagination may be shown by the intellectual anticipation and realization of such impressions; as in that glorious vignette of Turner's to the voyage of Columbus. "Slowly along the evening sky they went." Note especially therein, how admirably true to the natural form, and yet how suggestive of the battlement he has rendered the level flake of evening cloud.

§ 8. The action of contemplative imagination is not to be expressed by art.

I believe that it is unnecessary for me to enter into farther detail of illustration respecting these points; for fuller explanation of the operations of the contemplative faculty on things verbally expressible, the reader may be referred to Wordsworth's preface to his poems ; it only remains for us, here, to examine how far this imaginative or abstract conception is to be conveyed by the material art of the sculptor or the painter.

Now, it is evident that the bold action of either the fancy or the imagination, dependent on a bodiless and spiritual image of the object, is not to be by lines or colors represented. We cannot, in the painting of Satan fallen, suggest any image of pines or crags,—neither can we assimilate the brier and the banner, nor give human sympathy to the motion of the film, nor voice to the swinging of the pines.

§ 9. Except under narrow limits.—1st. Abstract rendering of form without color.

Yet certain powers there are, within due limits, of marking the thing represented with an ideal character ; and it was to these powers that I alluded in defining the meaning of the term ideal, in the thirteenth chapter of the preceding section. For it is by this operation that the productions of high art are separated from those of the realist.

And, first, there is evidently capability of separating color and form, and considering either separately. Form we find abstractedly considered by the sculptor, how far it would be possible to advantage a statue by the addition of color, I venture not to affirm ; the question is too extensive to be here discussed. High authorities and ancient practice, are in favor of color ; so the sculpture of the middle ages : the two statues of Mino da Fiesole in the church of St^a. Caterina at Pisa have been colored, the irises of the eyes painted dark, and the hair gilded, as also I think the Madonna in St^a. Maria della Spina ; the eyes have been painted in the sculptures of Orcagna in Or San Michele, but it looks like a remnant of barbarism, (compare the pulpit of Guida da Como, in the church of San Bartolomeo at Pistoja,) and I have never seen color on any solid forms, that did not, to my mind, neutralize all other power ; the porcelains of Luca della Robbia are painful examples, and in lower art, Florentine mosaic in relief ; gilding is more admissible, and tells sometimes sweetly upon figures of quaint design, as on the pulpit of St^a. Maria

Novella, while it spoils the classical ornaments of the mouldings. But the truest grandeur of sculpture I believe to be in the white form; something of this feeling may be owing to the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of obtaining truly noble color upon it, but if we could color the Elgin marbles with the flesh tint of Giorgione, I had rather not have it done.

§ 10. Of color without form.

Color, without form, is less frequently obtainable, and it may be doubted whether it be desirable: yet I think that to the full enjoyment of it, a certain abandonment of form is necessary; sometimes by reducing it to the shapeless glitter of the gem, as often Tintoret and Bassano; sometimes by loss of outline and blending of parts, as Turner; sometimes by flatness of mass, as often Giorgione and Titian. How far it is possible for the painter to represent those mountains of Shelley as the poet sees them, "mingling *their flames* with twilight," I cannot say; but my impression is, that there is no true abstract mode of considering color; and that all the loss of form in the works of Titian or Turner, is not ideal, but the representation of the natural conditions under which bright color is seen; for form is always in a measure lost by nature herself when color is very vivid.

§ 11. Or of both without texture.

Again, there is capability of representing the essential character, form, and color of an object, without external texture. On this point much has been said by Reynolds and others, and it is, indeed, perhaps the most unfailing characteristic of great manner in painting. Compare a dog of Edwin Landseer with a dog of Paul Veronese. In the first, the outward texture is wrought out with exquisite dexterity of handling, and minute attention to all the accidents of curl and gloss which can give appearance of reality, while the hue and power of the sunshine, and the truth of the shadow on all these forms is necessarily neglected, and the large relations of the animal as a mass of color to the sky or ground, or other parts of the picture, utterly lost. This is realism at the expense of ideality, it is treatment essentially unimaginative.* With Veronese, there is no curling nor crisping, no glossiness nor sparkle, hardly even hair, a mere type of hide, laid on with a few scene-painter's touches. But the essence of dog is there, the entire magnificent, generic animal type, muscular and living, and with broad, pure, sunny daylight upon him, and bearing his true and harmonious relation of color to all color about him. This is ideal treatment.

---

* I do not mean to withdraw the praise I have given, and shall always be willing to give such pictures as the Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner.

The same treatment is found in the works of all the greatest men, they all paint the lion more than his mane, and the horse rather than his hide; and I think also they are more careful to obtain the right expression of large and universal light and color, than local tints; for the warmth of sunshine, and the force of sun-lighted hue are always sublime on whatever subject they may be exhibited; and so also are light and shade, if grandly arranged, as may be well seen in an etching of Rembrandt's of a spotted shell, which he has made altogether sublime by broad truth and large ideality of light and shade; and so I have seen frequent instances of very grand ideality in treatment of the most commonplace still life, by our own Hunt, where the petty glosses and delicacies, and minor forms, are all merged in a broad glow of suffused color; so also in pieces of the same kind by Etty, where, however, though the richness and play of color are greater, and the arrangement grander, there is less expression of light, neither is there anything in modern art that can be set beside some choice passages of Hunt in this respect.

§ 12. Abstraction or typical representation of animal form.

Again, it is possible to represent objects capable of various accidents in a generic or symbolical form.

How far this may be done with things having necessary form, as animals, I am not prepared to say. The lions of the Egyptian room in the British Museum, and the fish beside Michael Angelo's Jonah, are instances; and there is imaginative power about both which we find not in the more perfectly realized Florentine boar, nor in Raffaelle's fish of the

---

and to all in which the character and inner life of animals are developed. But all lovers of art must regret to find Mr. Landseer wasting his energies on such inanities as the "Shoeing," and sacrificing color, expression, and action, to an imitation of glossy hide.

draught. And yet the propriety and nobility of these types depend on the architectural use and character of the one, and on the typical meaning of the other: we should be grieved to see the forms of the Egyptian lion substituted for those of Raffaelle's in its struggle with Samson, nor would the whale of Michael Angelo be tolerated in the nets of Gennesaret. So that I think it is only when the figure of the creature stands not for any representation of vitality, but merely for a letter or type of certain symbolical meaning, or else is adopted as a grand form of decoration or support in architecture, that such generalization is allowable, and in such circumstances I think it necessary, always provided it be based, as in the instances given I conceive it to be, upon thorough knowledge of the creature symbolized and wrought out by a master hand; and these conditions being observed, I believe it to be right and necessary in architecture to modify all animal forms by a severe architectural stamp, and in symbolical use of them, to adopt a typical form, to which practice the contrary, and its evil consequences are ludicrously exhibited in the St. Peter of Carlo Dolci in the Pitti palace, which owing to the prominent, glossy-plumed and crimson-combed cock, is liable to be taken for the portrait of a poulterer, only let it be observed that the treatment of the animal form here is offensive, not only from its realization, but from the pettiness and meanness of its realization; for it might, in other hands but Carlo Dolci's, have been a sublime cock, though a real one, but in his, it is fit for nothing but the spit. Compare as an example partly of symbolical treatment, partly of magnificent realization, that supernatural lion of Tintoret, in the picture of the Doge Loredano before the Madonna, with the plumes of his mighty wings clashed together in cloudlike repose, and the strength of the sea winds shut within their folding. And note farther the difference between the typical use of the animal, as in this case, and that of the fish of Jonah, and (again the fish before mentioned whose form is indicated in the clouds of the baptism), and the actual occurrence of the creature itself, with con-

§ 13. Either when it is symbolically used, cealed meaning, as the ass colt of the crucifixion, which it was necessary to paint as such, and not as an ideal form.

§ 14. Or in architectural decoration.

I cannot enter here into the question of the exact degree of severity and abstraction necessary in the forms of living things architecturally employed; my own feeling on the subject is, though I dare not lay it down as a principle, (with the Parthenon pediment standing against me like the shield of Ajax,) that no perfect representation of animal form is right in architectural decoration. For my own part, I had much rather see the metopes in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and the Parthenon without them, than have them together, and I would not surrender, in an architectural point of view, one mighty line of the colossal, quiet, life-in-death statue mountains in Egypt with their narrow fixed eyes and hands on their rocky limbs, nor one Romanesque façade with its porphyry mosaic of indefinable monsters, nor one Gothic moulding of rigid saints and grinning goblins, for ten Parthenons; and, I believe, I could show some rational ground for this seeming barbarity if this were the place to do so, but at present I can only ask the reader to compare the effect of the so-called barbarous ancient mosaics on the front of St. Mark's, as they have been recorded, happily, by the faithfulness of the good Gentile Bellini, in one of his pictures now in the Venice gallery, with the veritably barbarous pictorial substitutions of the fifteenth century, (one only of the old mosaics remains, or did remain till lately, over the northern door, but it is probably by this time torn down by some of the Venetian committees of taste,) and also I would have the old portions of the interior ceiling, or of the mosaics of Murano and Torcello, and the glorious Cimabue mosaic of Pisa, and the roof of the Baptistery at Parma, (that of the Florence Baptistery is a bad example, owing to its crude whites and complicated mosaic of small forms,) all of which are as barbarous as they can well be, in a certain sense, but mighty in their barbarism, with any architectural decorations whatsoever, consisting of professedly perfect animal forms, from the vile frescoes of Federigo Zuccaro at Florence to the ceiling of the Sistine, and again compare the professedly perfect sculpture of Milan Cathedral with the statues of the porches of Chartres; only be it always observed that it is not rudeness and ignorance of art, but intellectually awful abstraction that I uphold, and also be it noted that in all ornament, which takes place in the general effect merely as so much fretted stone, in capitals and other pieces of minute detail, the forms may be, and perhaps ought to be, elaborately imitative; and in this respect again, the capitals of St. Mark's church, and of the Doge's palace at Venice may be an example to the architects of all the world, in their boundless inventiveness, unfailing elegance, and elaborate finish; there is more mind poured out in turning a single angle of that church than would serve to build a modern cathedral;* and of the careful finish of the work, this may serve for example, that one of the capitals of the Doge's palace is formed of eight heads of different animals, of which one is a bear's with a honeycomb in the mouth, whose carved *cells* are *hexagonal.*

§ 15. Exception in delicate and superimposed ornament.

So far, then, of the abstraction proper to architecture, and to symbolical uses, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter at length, referring to it only at present as one of the operations of imagination contemplative; other abstractions there are which are necessarily consequent on the imperfection of materials, as of the hair in sculpture, which is necessarily treated in masses that are in no sort imitative, but only stand for hair,

§ 16. Abstraction necessary from imperfection of materials.

---

* I have not brought forward any instances of the imaginative power in architecture. as my object is not at present to exhibit its operation in all matter, but only to define its essence; but it may be well to note, in our own new houses of Parliament, how far a building approved by a committee of Taste, may proceed without manifestation either of imagination or composition; it remains to be seen how far the towers may redeem it; and I allude to it at present unwillingly, and only in the desire of influencing, so far as I may, those who have the power to prevent the adoption of a design for a bridge to take the place of Westminster, which was exhibited in 1844 at the Royal Academy, professing to be in harmony with the new building, but which was fit only to carry a railroad over a canal.

and have the grace, flow, and feeling of it without the texture or division, and other abstractions there are in which the form of one thing is fancifully indicated in the matter of another; as in phantoms and cloud shapes, the use of which, in mighty hands, is often most impressive, as in the cloudy charioted Apollo of Nicolo Poussin in our own gallery, which the reader may oppose to the substantial Apollo, in Wilson's Niobe, and again the phantom vignette of Turner already noticed; only such operations of the imagination are to be held of lower kind and dangerous consequence, if frequently trusted in, for those painters only have the right imaginative power who can set the supernatural form before us fleshed and boned like ourselves.* Other abstractions occur, frequently, of things which have much accidental variety of form, as of waves, on Greek sculptures in successive volutes, and of clouds often in supporting volumes in the sacred pictures; but these I do not look upon as results of imagination at all, but mere signs and letters; and whenever a very highly imaginative mind touches them, it always realizes as far as may be. Even Titian is content to use at the top of his St. Pietro Martiri, the conventional, round, opaque cloud, which cuts his trees open like a gouge; but Tintoret, in his picture of the Golden Calf, though compelled to represent the Sinai under conventional form, in order that the receiving of the tables might be seen at the top of it, yet so soon as it is possible to give more truth, he is ready with it; he takes a grand fold of horizontal cloud straight from the flanks of the Alps, and shows the forests of the mountains through its misty volumes, like sea-weed through deep sea.† Nevertheless, when the realization is impossible, bold symbolism is of the highest value, and in religious art, as we shall presently see, even necessary, as of the rays of light in the Titian woodcut of St. Francis before

§ 17. Abstractions of things capable of varied accident are not imaginative.

§ 18. Yet sometimes valuable.

---

* Comp. Ch. V. § 5.

† All the clouds of Tintoret are sublime; the worst that I know in art are Correggio's, especially in the Madonna della Scudella, and Dome of Parma.

noticed ; and sometimes the attention is directed by some such strange form to the meaning of the image, which may be missed if it remains in its natural purity, (as, I suppose, few in looking at the Cephalus and Procris of Turner, note the sympathy of those faint rays that are just drawing back and dying between the trunks of the far-off forest, with the ebbing life of the nymph ; unless, indeed, they happen to recollect the same sympathy marked by Shelley in the Alastor ;) but the imagination is not shown in any such modifications ; however, in some cases they may be valuable (in the Cephalus they would be utterly destructive,) and I note them merely in consequence of their peculiar use in religious art, presently to be examined.

§ 19. Exaggeration. Its laws and limits. First, in scale of representation.

The last mode we have here to note in which the imagination regardant may be expressed in art is exaggeration, of which, as it is the vice of all bad artists, and may be constantly resorted to without any warrant of imagination, it is necessary to note strictly the admissable limits.

In the first place, a colossal statue is necessarily no more an exaggeration of what it represents than a miniature is a diminution, it need not be a representation of a giant, but a representation, on a large scale, of a man ; only it is to be observed, that as any plane intersecting the cone of rays between us and the object, must receive an image smaller than the object ; a small image is rationally and completely expressive of a larger one ; but not a large of a small one. Hence I think that all statues above the Elgin standard, or that of Michael Angelo's Night and Morning, are, in a measure, taken by the eye for representations of giants, and I think them always disagreeable. The amount of exaggeration admitted by Michael Angelo is valuable because it separates the emblematic from the human form, and gives greater freedom to the grand lines of the frame ; for notice of his scientific system of increase of size I may refer the reader to Sir Charles Bell's remarks on the statues of the Medici chapel ; but there is one circumstance which Sir Charles has not noticed, and in the interpretation of which, therefore, it is likely I may be myself wrong; that the extremities are singularly small in proportion to the limbs, by which means there is an expression given of strength and activity greater than in the ordinary human type, which appears to me to be an allowance for that alteration in proportion necessitated by increase of size, of which we took note in Chap. VI. of the first section, § 10, note; not but that Michael Angelo always makes the extremities comparatively small, but smallest, comparatively, in his largest works; so I think, from the size of the head, it may be conjectured respecting the Theseus of the Elgins. Such adaptations are not necessary when the exaggerated image is spectral: for as the laws of matter in that case can have no operation, we may expand the form as far as we choose, only let careful distinction be made between the size of the thing represented, and the scale of the representation. The canvas on which Fuseli has stretched his Satan in the schools of the Royal Academy is a mere concession to inability. He might have made him look more gigantic in one of a foot square.

§ 20. Secondly, of things capable of variety of scale.

Another kind of exaggeration is of things whose size is variable to a size or degree greater than that usual with them, as in waves and mountains; and there are hardly any limits to this exaggeration so long as the laws which nature observes in her increase be observed. Thus, for instance: the form and polished surface of a breaking ripple three inches high, are not representation of either the form or the surface of the surf of a storm, nodding ten feet above the beach; neither would the cutting ripple of a breeze upon a lake if simply exaggerated, represent the forms of Atlantic surges; but as nature increases her bulk, she diminishes the angles of ascent, and increases her divisions; and if we would represent surges of size greater than ever existed, which it is lawful to do, we must carry out these operations to still greater extent. Thus, Turner, in his picture of the Slave Ship, divides the whole sea into two masses of enormous swell, and conceals the horizon by a gradual slope of only two or three degrees. This is intellectual exaggeration. In the Academy exhibition of

1843, there was, in one of the smaller rooms, a black picture of a storm, in which there appeared on the near sea, just about to be overwhelmed by an enormous breaker, curling right over it, an object at first sight liable to be taken for a walnut shell, but which, on close examination, proved to be a ship with mast and sail, with Christ and his twelve disciples in it. This is childish exaggeration, because it is impossible, by the laws of matter and motion, that such a breaker should ever exist. Again in mountains, we have repeatedly observed the necessary building up and multitudinous division of the higher peaks, and the smallness of the slopes by which they usually rise. We may, therefore, build up the mountain as high as we please, but we must do it in nature's way, and not in impossible peaks and precipices ; not but that a daring feature is admissible here and there, as the Matterhorn is admitted by nature ; but we must not compose a picture out of such exceptions ; we may use them, but they must be as exceptions exhibited. I shall have much to say, when we come to treat of the sublime, of the various modes of treating mountain form, so that at present I shall only point to an unfortunate instance of inexcusable and effectless exaggeration in the distance of Turner's vignette to Milton, (the temptation on the mountain,) and desire the reader to compare it with legitimate exaggeration, in the vignette to the second part of Jacqueline, in Rogers's poems.

§ 21. Thirdly, necessary in expression of characteristic features on diminished scale.

Another kind of exaggeration is necessary to retain the characteristic impressions of nature on reduced scale ; it is not possible, for instance, to give the leafage of trees in its proper proportion, when the trees represented are large, without entirely losing their grace of form and curvature ; of this the best proof is found in the Calotype or Daguerreotype, which fail in foliage, not only because the green rays are ineffective, but because, on the small scale of the image, the reduced leaves lose their organization, and look like moss attached to sticks. In order to retain, therefore, the character of flexibility and beauty of foliage, the painter is often compelled to increase the proportionate size of the leaves, and to arrange them in generic masses. Of this treatment compare the grand examples throughout the Liber Studiorum. It is by such means only that the ideal character of objects is to be preserved ; as we before observed in the 13th chapter of the first section. In all these cases exaggeration is only lawful as the sole means of arriving at truth of impression when strict fidelity is out of the question.

Other modes of exaggeration there are, on which I shall not at present farther insist, the proper place for their discussion being in treating of the sublime, and these which I have at present instanced are enough to establish the point at issue, respecting imaginative verity, inasmuch as we find that exaggeration itself, if imaginative, is referred to principles of truth, and of actual being.

§ 22. Recapitulation.

We have now, I think, reviewed the various modes in which imagination contemplative may be exhibited in art, and arrived at all necessary certainties respecting the essence of the faculty : which we have found in all its three functions, associative of truth, penetrative of truth, and contemplative of truth ; and having no dealings nor relations with any kind of falsity. One task, however, remains to us, namely, to observe the operation of the theoretic and imaginative faculties together, in the attempt at realization to the bodily sense of beauty supernatural and divine.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE SUPERHUMAN IDEAL.

§ 1. The subject is not to be here treated in detail.

In our investigation in the first section of the laws of beauty, we confined ourselves to the observation of lower nature, or of humanity. We were prevented from proceeding to deduce conclusions respecting divine ideality by our not having then established any principles respecting the imaginative faculty, by which, under the discipline of the theoretic, such ideality is conceived. I had purposed to conclude the present section by a careful examination of this subject; but as this is evidently foreign to the matter immediately under discussion, and involves questions of great intricacy respecting the development of mind among those pagan nations who are supposed to have produced high examples of spiritual ideality, I believe it will be better to delay such inquiries until we have concluded our detailed observation of the beauty of visible nature; and I shall therefore at present take notice only of one or two broad principles, which were referred to, or implied, in the chapter respecting the human ideal, and without the enunciation of which that chapter might lead to false conclusions.

§ 2. The conceivable modes of manifestation of Spiritual Beings are four.

There are four ways in which beings supernatural may be conceived as manifesting themselves to human sense. The first, by external types, signs, or influences; as God to Moses in the flames of the bush, and to Elijah in the voice of Horeb.

The second, by the assuming of a form not properly belonging to them; as the Holy Spirit of that of a Dove, the second person of the Trinity of that of a Lamb; and so such manifestations, under angelic or other form, of the first person of the Trinity, as seem to have been made to Abraham, Moses, and Ezekiel.

The third, by the manifestation of a form properly belonging to them, but not necessarily seen; as of the Risen Christ to his disciples when the doors were shut. And the fourth, by their operation on the human form, which they influence or inspire, as in the shining of the face of Moses.

§ 3. And these are in or through creature forms familiar to us.

It is evident that in all these cases, wherever there is form at all, it is the form of some creature to us known. It is no new form peculiar to spirit nor can it be. We can conceive of none. Our inquiry is simply, therefore, by what modifications those creature forms to us known, as of a lamb, a bird, or a human creature, may be explained as signs or habitations of Divinity, or of angelic essence, and not creatures such as they seem.

This may be done in two ways. First, by effecting some change in the appearance of the creature inconsistent with its actual nature, as by giving it colossal size, or unnatural color, or material, as of gold, or silver, or flame, instead of flesh, or by taking away its property of matter altogether, and forming it of light or shade, or in an intermediate step, of cloud, or vapor; or explaining it by terrible concomitant circumstances, as of wounds in the body, or strange lights and seemings round about it; or by joining of two bodies together as in angels' wings. Of all which means of attaining supernatural character (which though, in their nature ordinary and vulgar, are yet effective and very glorious in mighty hands) we have already seen the limits in speaking of the imagination.

§ 4. Supernatural character may be impressed on these either by phenomena inconsistent with their common nature (compare Chap. iv., § 16).

§ 5. Or by inherent Dignity.

But the second means of obtaining supernatural character is that with which we are now concerned, namely, retaining the actual form in its full and material presence, and without aid from any external interpretation whatsoever, to raise that form by mere inherent dignity to such a pitch of power and impressiveness as cannot but assert and stamp it for superhuman.

On the north side of the Campo Santo at Pisa, are a series of paintings from the Old Testament History by Benozzo Gozzoli. In the earlier of these angelic presences, mingled with human, occur frequently, illustrated by no awfulness of light, nor incorporeal tracing. Clear revealed they move, in human forms, in the broad daylight and on the open earth, side by side, and hand in hand with men. But they never miss of the angel.

He who can do this has reached the last pinnacle and utmost power of ideal, or any other art. He stands in no need thenceforward, of cloud, nor lightning, nor tempest, nor terror of mystery. His sublime is independent of the elements. It is of that which shall stand when they shall melt with fervent heat, and light the firmament when the sun is as sackcloth of hair.

§ 6 1st. Of the expression of inspiration.

Let us consider by what means this has been effected, so far as they are by analysis traceable; and that is not far, for here, as always, we find that the greater part of what has been rightly accomplished has been done by faith and intense feeling, and cannot, by aid of any rules or teaching, be either tried, estimated, or imitated.

And first, of the expression of supernatural influence on forms actually human, as of sibyl or prophet. It is evident that not only here is it unnecessary, but we are not altogether at liberty to trust for expression to the utmost ennobling of the human form ; for we cannot do more than this, when that form is to be the actual representation, and not the recipient of divine presence. Hence, in order to retain the actual humanity definitely, we must leave upon it such signs of the operation of sin and the liability to death as are consistent with human ideality, and often more than these, definite signs of immediate and active evil, when the prophetic spirit is to be expressed in men such as were Saul and Balaam ; neither may we ever, with just discrimination, touch the utmost limits of beauty in human form when inspiration is to be expressed, and not angelic or divine being ; of which reserve and subjection the most instructive instances are found in the works of Angelico, who invariably uses inferior types for the features of humanity, even glorified, (excepting always the Madonna,) nor ever exerts his full power of beauty either in feature or expression, except in angels or in the Madonna or in Christ. Now the expression of spiritual influence without supreme elevation of the bodily type we have seen to be a work of imagination penetrative, and we found it accomplished by Michael Angelo ; but I think by him only. I am aware of no one else who, to my mind, has expressed the inspiration of prophet or sibyl ; this, however, I affirm not, but shall leave to the determination of the reader, as the principles at present to be noted refer entirely to that elevation of the creature form necessary when it is actually representative of a spiritual being.

§ 7. No representation of that which is more than creature is possible.

I have affirmed in the conclusion of the first section that "of that which is more than creature, no creature ever conceived." I think this almost self-evident, for it is clear that the illim itableness of Divine attributes cannot be by matter represented, (though it may be typified,) and I believe that all who are acquainted with the range of sacred art will admit, not only that no representation of Christ has ever been even partially successful, but that the greatest painters fall therein below their accustomed level ; Perugino and Fra Angelico especially ; Leonardi has I think done best, but perhaps the beauty of the fragment left at Milan, (for in spite of all that is said of repainting and destruction, that Cenacolo is still the finest in existence) is as much dependent on the very untraceableness resulting from injury as on its original perfection. Of more daring attempts at representation of Divinity we need not speak ; only this is to be noted respecting them, that though by the ignorant Romanists many such efforts were made under the idea of actual representation, (note the way in which Cellini speaks of the seal made for the Pope,) by the nobler among them I suppose they were intended, and by us at any rate they may always be received, as mere symbols, the noblest that could be employed, but as much symbols still as a triangle, or the Alpha and Omega ; nor do I think that the most scrupulous amongst Christians ought to desire to exchange the power obtained by the use of this symbol in Michael Angelo's creation of Adam and of Eve for the effect which would be produced by the substitution of a triangle or any other sign in place of it. Of these efforts then we need reason no farther, but may limit ourselves to considering the purest modes of giving a conception of superhuman but still creature form, as of angels ; in equal rank with whom, perhaps, we may without offence place the mother of Christ : at least we must so regard the type of the Madonna in receiving it from Romanist painters.*

---

* I take no note of the representation of *evil* spirits, since throughout we have been occupied in the pursuit of beauty : but it may be observed generally that there is great difficulty to be overcome in attempts of this kind, because the elevation of the form necessary to give it spirituality destroys the appearance of evil ; hence even the greatest painters have been reduced to receive aid from the fancy, and to eke out all they could conceive of malignity by help of horns, hoofs, and claws. Giotto's Satan in the Campo Santo, with the serpent gnawing the heart,

§ 8. Supernatural character expressed by modification of accessories.

And first, much is to be done by right modification of accessory circumstances, so as to express miraculous power exercised over them by the spiritual creature. There is a beautiful instance of this in John Bellini's picture of St. Jerome at Venice. The saint sits upon a rock, his grand form defined against clear green open sky; he is reading, a noble tree springs out of a cleft in the rock, bends itself suddenly back to form a rest for the volume, then shoots up into the sky. There is something very beautiful in this obedient ministry of the lower creature; but be it observed that the sweet feeling of the whole depends upon the service being such as is consistent with its nature. It is not animated, it does not *listen* to the saint, nor bend itself towards him as if in affection, this would have been mere fancy, illegitimate and effectless. But the simple bend of the trunk to receive the book is miraculous subjection of the true nature of the tree; it is therefore imaginative, and very touching.

§ 9. Landscape of the religious painters. Its character is eminently symmetrical.

It is not often however that the religious painters even go this length; they content themselves usually with impressing on the landscape perfect symmetry and order, such as may seem consistent with, or induced by the spiritual nature they would represent. All signs of decay, disturbance, and imperfection, are also banished; and in doing this it is evident that some unnaturalness and singularity must result, inasmuch

is fine; so many of the fiends of Orcagna, and always those of Michael Angelo. Tintoret in the Temptation, with his usual truth of invention, has represented the evil spirit under the form of a fair angel, the wings burning with crimson and silver, the face sensual and treacherous. It is instructive to compare the results of imagination associated with powerful fancy in the demons of these great painters, or even in such nightmares as that of Salvator already spoken of, Sect. I. Chap. V. § 12 (note,) with the simple ugliness of idiotic distortion in the meaningless terrorless monsters of Bronzino in the large picture of the Uffizii, where the painter, utterly uninventive, having assembled all that is abominable of hanging flesh, bony limbs, crane necks, staring eyes, and straggling hair, cannot yet by the sum and substance of all obtain as much real fearfulness as an imaginative painter could throw into the turn of a lip or the knitting of a brow.

as there are no veritable forms of landscape but express or imply a state of progression or of imperfection. All mountain forms are seen to be produced by convulsion and modelled by decay ; the finer forms of cloud have stories in them about storm ; all forest grouping is wrought out with varieties of strength and growth among its several members, and bears evidences of struggle with unkind influences. All such appearances are banished in the supernatural landscape ; the trees grow straight, equally branched on each side, and of such slight and feathery frame as shows them never to have encountered blight or frost or tempest. The mountains stand up in fantastic pinnacles ; there is on them no trace of torrent, no scathe of lightning ; no fallen fragments encumber their foundations, no worn ravines divide their flanks ; the seas are always waveless, the skies always calm, crossed only by fair, horizontal, lightly wreathed, white clouds.

§ 10. Landscape of Benozzo Gozzoli.

In some cases these conditions result partly from feeling, partly from ignorance of the facts of nature, or incapability of representing them, as in the first type of the treatment found in Giotto and his school ; in others they are observed on principle, as by Benozzo Gozzoli, Perugino, and Raffaelle. There is a beautiful instance by the former in the frescoes of the Ricardi palace, where behind the adoring angel groups the landscape is governed by the most absolute symmetry ; roses and pomegranates, their leaves drawn to the last rib and vein, twine themselves in fair and perfect order about delicate trellises ; broad stone pines and tall cypresses overshadow them, bright birds hover here and there in the serene sky, and groups of angels, hand joined with hand, and wing with wing, glide and float through the glades of the unentangled forest. But behind the human figures, behind the pomp and turbulence of the Kingly procession descending from the distant hills the spirit of the landscape is changed. Severer mountains rise in the distance, ruder prominences and less flowery vary the nearer ground, and gloomy shadows remain unbroken beneath the forest branches.

The landscape of Perugino, for grace, purity and as much of nature as is consistent with the above-named conditions, is unrivalled; and the more interesting because in him certainly whatever limits are set to the rendering of nature proceed not from incapability. The sea is in the distance almost always, then some blue promontories and undulating dewy park ground, studded with glittering trees; in the landscape of the fresco in S^{ta}. Maria Maddalena at Florence there is more variety than is usual with him; a gentle river winds round the bases of rocky hills, a river like our own Wye or Tees in their loveliest reaches; level meadows stretch away on its opposite side; mounds set with slender-stemmed foliage occupy the nearer ground, a small village with its simple spire peeps from the forest at the bend of the valley, and it is remarkable that in architecture thus employed neither Perugino nor any other of the ideal painters ever use Italian forms but always Transalpine, both of church and castle. The little landscape which forms the background of his own portrait in the Uffizii is another highly finished and characteristic example. The landscape of Raffaelle was learned from his father, and continued for some time little modified, though expressed with greater refinement. It became afterward conventional and poor, and in some cases altogether meaningless. The hay stacks and vulgar trees behind the St. Cecilia at Bologna form a painful contrast to the pure space of mountain country in the Perugino opposite.*

§ 11. Landscape of Perugino and Raffaelle.

In all these cases, while I would uphold the landscape thus employed and treated, as worthy of all admiration, I should be sorry to advance it for imitation. What is right in its mannerism arose from keen feeling in the painter: imitated without the same

§ 12. Such Landscape is not to be imitated.

---

* I have not thought it necessary to give farther instances at present, since I purpose hereafter to give numerous examples of this kind of ideal landscape. Of true and noble landscape, as such, I am aware of no instances except where least they might have been expected, among the sea-bred Venetians. Ghirlandajo shows keen, though prosaic, sense of nature in that view of Venice behind an Adoration of Magi in the Uffizii, but he at last walled himself up among gilded entablatures. Masaccio indeed has given one grand example in the fresco of the Tribute Money, but its color is now nearly lost.

feeling, it would be painful; the only safe mode of following in such steps is to attain perfect knowledge of nature herself, and then to suffer our own feelings to guide us in the selection of what is fitting for any particular purpose. Every painter ought to paint what he himself loves, not what others have loved; if his mind be pure and sweetly toned, what he loves will be lovely; if otherwise, no example can guide his selection, no precept govern his hand; and farther let it be distinctly observed, that all this mannered landscape is only right under the supposition of its being a background to some supernatural presence; behind mortal beings it would be wrong, and by itself, as landscape, ridiculous; and farther, the chief virtue of it results from the exquisite refinement of those natural details consistent with its character from the botanical drawing of the flowers and the clearness and brightness of the sky.

§ 13. Color, and Decoration. Their use in representations of the Supernatural.

Another mode of attaining supernatural character is by purity of color almost shadowless, no more darkness being allowed than is absolutely necessary for the explanation of the forms, and the vividness of the effect enhanced as far as may be by use of gilding, enamel, and other jewellery. I think the smaller works of Angelico are perfect models in this respect; the glories about the heads being of beaten rays of gold, on which the light plays and changes as the spectator moves; (and which therefore throw the purest flesh color out in dark relief) and such color and light being obtained by the enamelling of the angel wings as of course is utterly unattainable by any other expedient of art; the colors of the draperies always pure and pale; blue, rose, or tender green, or brown, but never dark or gloomy; the faces of the most celestial fairness, brightly flushed: the height and glow of this flush are noticed by Constantin as reserved by the older painters for spiritual beings, as if expressive of light seen through the body.

I cannot think it necessary while I insist on the value of all these seemingly childish means when in the hands of a noble painter, to assert also their futility and even absurdity if employed by no exalted power. I think the error has commonly been on the side of scorn, and that we reject much in our foolish vanity, which if wiser and more earnest we should delight in. But two points it is very necessary to note in the use of such accessories.

§ 14. Decoration so used must be generic.

The first that the ornaments used by Angelico, Giotto, and Perugino, but especially by Angelico, are always of a generic and abstract character. They are not diamonds, nor brocades, nor velvets, nor gold embroideries; they are mere spots of gold or of color, simple patterns upon *textureless* draperies; the angel wings burn with transparent crimson and purple and amber, but they are not set forth with peacock's plumes; the golden circlets gleam with changeful light, but they are not beaded with elaborate pearls nor set with studied sapphires.

In the works of Filippino Lippi, Mantegna, and many other painters following, interesting examples may be found of the opposite treatment; and as in Lippi the heads are usually very sweet, and the composition severe, the degrading effect of the realized decorations and imitated dress may be seen in him simply, and without any addition of painfulness from other deficiencies of feeling. The larger of the two pictures in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii, but for this defect, would have been a very noble ideal work.

§ 15. And color pure.

The second point to be observed is that brightness of color is altogether inadmissible without purity and harmony; and that the sacred painters must not be followed in their frankness of unshadowed color unless we can also follow them in its clearness. As far as I am acquainted with the modern schools of Germany, they seem to be entirely ignorant of the value of color as an assistant of feeling, and to think that hardness, dryness, and opacity are its virtues as employed in religious art; whereas I hesitate not to affirm that in such art more than in any other, clearness, luminousness and intensity of hue are essential to right impression; and from the walls of the Arena chapel in their rainbow play of brilliant harmonies, to the solemn purple tones of Perugino's fresco in the Albizzi palace, I know not any great work of sacred art which is not as precious in color as in all other qualities (unless indeed it be a Crucifixion of Fra Angelico in the Florence Academy, which has just been glazed and pumiced and painted and varnished by the picture-cleaners until it glares from one end of the picture gallery to the other;) only the pure white light and delicate hue of the idealists, whose colors are by preference such as we have seen to be the most beautiful in the chapter on Purity are carefully to be distinguished from the golden light and deep pitched-hue of the school of Titian whose virtue is the grandeur of earthly solemnity, not the glory of heavenly rejoicing.

§ 16. Ideal form of the body itself, of what variety susceptible.

But leaving these accessory circumstances and touching the treatment of the bodily form, it is evident in the first place that whatever typical beauty the human body is capable of possessing must be bestowed upon it when it is understood as spiritual. And therefore those general proportions and types which are deducible from comparison of the nobler individuals of the race, must be adopted and adhered to ; admitting among them not, as in the human ideal, such varieties as result from past suffering, or contest with sin, but such only as are consistent with sinless nature or are the signs of instantly or continually operative affections ; for though it is conceivable that spirit should suffer, it is inconceivable that spiritual frame should retain like the stamped inelastic human clay, the brand of sorrow past, unless fallen.

> "His face,
> Deep scars of thunder had entrenched, and care
> Sat on his faded cheek."

Yet so far forth the angelic ideal is diminished, nor could this be suffered in pictorial representation.

§ 17. Anatomical development how far admissible.

Again, such muscular development as is necessary to the perfect beauty of the body, is to be rendered. But that which is necessary to strength, or which appears to have been the result of laborious exercise, is inadmissible. No herculean form is spiritual, for it is degrading the spiritual creature to suppose it operative through impulse of bone and sinew ; its power is immaterial and constant, neither dependent on, nor developed by exertion. Generally, it is well to conceal anatomical development as far as may be; even Michael Angelo's anatomy interferes with his divinity; in the hands of lower men the angel becomes a preparation. How far it is possible to subdue or generalize the naked form I venture not to affirm, but I believe that it is best to conceal it as far as may be, not with draperies light and undulating, that fall in with, and exhibit its principal lines, but with draperies severe and linear, such as were constantly employed before the time of Raffaelle. I recollect no single instance of a naked angel that does not look boylike or childlike, and unspiritualized; even Fra Bartolomeo's might with advantage be spared from the pictures at Lucca, and, in the hands of inferior men, the sky is merely encumbered with sprawling infants; those of Domenichino in the Madonna del Rosario, and Martyrdom of St. Agnes, are peculiarly offensive, studies of bare-legged children howling and kicking in volumes of smoke. Confusion seems to exist in the minds of subsequent painters between Angels and Cupids.

§ 18. Symmetry. How valuable.

Farther, the qualities of symmetry and repose are of peculiar value in spiritual form. We find the former most earnestly sought by all the great painters in the arrangement of the hair, wherein no loosely flowing nor varied form is admitted, but all restrained in undisturbed and equal ringlets; often, as in the infant Christ of Fra Angelico, supported on the forehead in forms of sculpturesque severity. The Angel of Masaccio, in the Deliverance of Peter, grand both in countenance and motion, loses much of his spirituality because the painter has put a little too much of his own character into the hair, and left it disordered.

§ 19. The influence of Greek art, how dangerous.

Of repose, and its exalting power, I have already said enough for our present purpose, though I have not insisted on the peculiar manifestation of it in the Christian ideal as opposed to the pagan. But this, as well as all other questions relating to the particular development of the Greek mind, is foreign to the immediate inquiry, which therefore I shall here conclude in the hope of resuming it in detail after examining the laws of beauty in the inanimate creation; always, however, holding this for certain, that of whatever kind or degree the short coming may be, it is not possible but that short coming should be visible in every pagan conception, when set beside Christian; and believing, for my own part, that there is not only deficiency, but such difference in kind as must make all Greek conception full of danger to the student in proportion to his admiration of it; as I think has been fatally seen in its effect on the Italian schools, when its pernicious element first mingled with their solemn purity, and recently in its influence on the French historical painters: neither can I from my present knowledge fix upon an ancient statue which expresses by the countenance any one elevated character of soul, or any single enthusiastic self-abandoning affection, much less any such majesty of feeling as might mark the features for supernatural. The Greek could not conceive a

§ 20. Its scope, how limited.

spirit; he could do nothing without limbs; his god is a finite god, talking, pursuing, and going journeys;* if at any time he was touched with a true feeling of the unseen powers around him, it was in the field of poised battle, for there is something in the near coming of the shadow of death, something in the devoted fulfilment of mortal duty, that reveals the real God, though darkly; that pause on the field of Platæa was not one of vain superstition; the two white figures that blazed along the Delphic plain, when the earthquake and the fire led the charge from Olympus, were more than sunbeams on the battle dust; the sacred cloud, with its lance light and triumph singing, that went down to brood over the masts of Salamis, was more than morning mist among the olives; and yet what were the Greek's thoughts of his god of battle? No spirit power was in the vision; it was a being of clay strength and human passion, foul, fierce, and changeful; of penetrable arms and vulnerable flesh. Gather what we may of great, from pagan chisel or pagan dream, and set it beside the orderer of Christian warfare, Michael the Archangel: not Milton's "with hostile brow and visage all inflamed," not even Milton's in kingly treading of the hills of Paradise, not Raffaelle's with the expanded wings and brandished spear, but Perugino's with his triple crest of traceless plume unshaken in heaven, his hand fallen on his crossleted sword, the truth girdle binding his undinted armor; God has put his power upon him, resistless radiance is on his limbs, no lines are there of earthly strength, no trace on the divine features of earthly anger; trustful and thoughtful, fearless, but full of love, incapable except of the repose of eternal conquest, vessel and instrument of Omnipotence, filled like a cloud with the victor light, the dust of principalities and powers beneath his feet, the murmur of hell against him heard by his spiritual ear like the winding of a shell on the far-off sea-shore.

---

* I know not anything in the range of art more unspiritual than the Apollo Belvidere; the raising of the fingers of the right hand in surprise at the truth of the arrow is altogether human, and would be vulgar in a prince, much more in a deity. The sandals destroy the divinity of the foot, and the lip is curled with mortal passion.

§ 21. Conclusion.

It is vain to attempt to pursue the comparison; the two orders of art have in them nothing common, and the field of sacred history, the intent and scope of Christian feeling, are too wide and exalted to admit of the juxtaposition of any other sphere or order of conception; they embrace all other fields like the dome of heaven. With what comparison shall we compare the types of the martyr saints, the St. Stephen of Fra Bartolomeo, with his calm forehead crowned by the stony diadem, or the St. Catherine of Raffaelle looking up to heaven in the dawn of the eternal day, with her lips parted in the resting from her pain? or with what the Madonnas of Francia and Pinturicchio, in whom the hues of the morning and the solemnity of the eve, the gladness in accomplished promise, and sorrow of the sword-pierced heart, are gathered into one human lamp of ineffable love? or with what the angel choirs of Angelico, with the flames on their white foreheads waving brighter as they move, and the sparkles streaming from their purple wings like the glitter of many suns upon a sounding sea, listening, in the pauses of alternate song, for the prolonging of the trumpet blast, and the answering of psaltery and cymbal, throughout the endless deep and from all the star shores of heaven?

ADDENDA.

Although the plan of the present portion of this work does not admit of particular criticism, it will neither be useless nor irrelevant to refer to one or two works, lately before the public, in the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy, which either illustrate, or present exceptions to, any of the preceding statements. I would first mention, with reference to what has been advanced respecting the functions of Associative Imagination, the very important work of Mr. Linnell, the "Eve of the Deluge;" a picture upheld by its admirers (and these were some of the most intelligent judges of the day) for a work of consummate imaginative power; while it was pronounced by the public journals to be "a chaos of unconcocted color." If the writers for the press had been aware of the kind of study pursued by Mr. Linnell through many laborious years, characterized by an observance of nature scrupulously and minutely patient, directed by the deepest sensibility, and aided by a power of drawing almost too refined for landscape subjects, and only to be understood by reference to his engravings after Michael Angelo, they would have felt it to be unlikely that the work of such a man should be entirely undeserving of respect. On the other hand, the grounds of its praise were unfortunately chosen; for, though possessing many merits, it had no claim whatever to be ranked among productions of Creative art. It would perhaps be difficult to point to a work so exalted in feeling, and so deficient in invention. The sky had been strictly taken from nature, this was evident at a glance; and as a study of sky it was every way noble. To the purpose of the picture it hardly contributed; its sublimity was that of splendor, not of terror; and its darkness that of retreating, not of gathering, storm. The features of the landscape were devoid alike of variety and probability; the division of the scene by the central valley and winding river at once theatrical and commonplace; and the foreground, on which the light was intense, alike devoid of dignity in arrangement, and of interest in detail.

The falseness or deficiency of color in the works of Mr. Landseer has been remarked above. The writer has much pleasure in noticing a very beautiful exception in the picture of the "Random Shot," certainly the most successful rendering he has ever seen of the hue of snow under warm but subdued light. The subtlety of gradation from the portions of the wreath fully illumined, to those which, feebly tinged by the horizontal rays, swelled into a dome of dim purple, dark against the green evening sky; the truth of the blue shadows, with which this dome was barred, and the depth of delicate color out of which the lights upon the footprints were raised, deserved the most earnest and serious admiration; proving, at the same time, that the errors in color, so frequently to be regretted in the works of the painter, are the result rather of inattention than of feeble perception. A curious proof of this inattention occurs in the disposition of the shadows in the background of the "Old Cover Hack," No. 229. One of its points of light is on the rusty iron handle of a pump, in the shape of an S. The sun strikes the greater part of its length, illuminating the perpendicular portion of the curve; yet shadow is only cast on the wall behind by the returning portion of the lower extremity. A smile may be excited by the notice of so trivial a circumstance; but the simplicity of the error renders it the more remarkable, and the great masters of chiaroscuro are accurate in all such minor points; a vague sense of greater truth results from this correctness, even when it is not in particulars analyzed or noted by the observer. In the small but very valuable Paul Potter in Lord Westminster's collection, the body of one of the sheep under the hedge is for the most part in shadow, but the sunlight touches the extremity of the back. The sun is low, and the shadows feeble and distorted; yet that of the sunlighted fleece is cast exactly in its true place and proportion beyond that of the hedge. The spectator may not observe this; yet, unobserved, it is one of the circumstances which make him feel the picture to be full of sunshine.

As an example of perfect color, and of the most refined handling ever perhaps exhibited in animal painting, the Butcher's Dog in the corner of Mr. Mulready's "Butt," No. 160, deserved a whole room of the Academy to himself. This, with the spaniel in the "Choosing the Wedding Gown," and the two dogs in the hayfield subject (Burchell and Sophia), displays perhaps the most wonderful, because the most dignified, finish in the expression of anatomy and covering—of muscle and hide at once, and assuredly the most perfect unity of drawing and color, which the entire range of ancient and modern art can exhibit. Albert Durer is indeed the only rival who might be suggested; and, though greater far in imagination, and equal in draughtsmanship, Albert Durer was less true and less delicate in hue. In sculpturesque arrangement both masters show the same degree of feeling: any of these dogs of Mulready might be taken out of the canvas and cut in alabaster, or, perhaps better, struck upon a coin. Every lock and line of the hair has been grouped as it is on a Greek die; and if this not always without some loss of ease and of action, yet this very loss is ennobling, in a period when all is generally sacrificed to the great coxcombry of art, the affectation of ease.

Yet Mr. Mulready himself is not always free from affectation of some kind; mannerism, at least, there is in his treatment of tree trunks. There is a ghastliness about his labored anatomies of them, as well as a want of specific character. Why need they be always flayed? The hide of a beech tree, or of a birch or fir, is nearly as fair a thing as an animal's; glossy as a dove's neck barred with black like a zebra, or glowing in purple grey and velvet brown like furry cattle in sunset. Why not paint these as Mr. Mulready paints other things, as they are? that simplest, that deepest of all secrets, which gives such majesty to the ragged leaves about the edges of the pond in the "Gravel-pit," (No. 125,) and imparts a strange interest to the grey ragged urchins disappearing behind the bank, that bank so low, so familiar, so sublime! What a contrast between the deep sentiment of that commonest of all common, homeliest of all homely, subjects, and the lost sentiment of Mr. Stanfield's "Amalfi" the chief landscape of the year, full of exalted material, and mighty crags, and massy seas, grottoes, precipices, and convents, fortress-towers and cloud-capped mountains, and all in vain, merely because that same simple secret has been despised; because nothing there is painted as it is! The picture was a most singular example of the scenic assemblage of contradictory theme which is characteristic of Picturesque, as opposed to Poetical, composition. The lines chosen from Rogers for a titular legend were full of summer, glowing with golden light, and toned with quiet melancholy:

"To him who sails
Under the shore, a few white villages,
Scattered above, below, some in the clouds,
Some on the margin of the dark blue sea,
And glittering thro' their lemon groves, announce
The region of Amalfi. Then, half-fallen,
A lonely watch-tower on the precipice,
Their ancient landmark, comes—long may it last!
And to the seaman, in a distant age,
Though now he little thinks how large his debt,
Serve for their monument."

Prepared by these lines for a dream upon deep, calm waters, under the shadow and scent of the close lemon leaves, the spectator found himself placed by the painter, wet through, in a noisy fishing boat, on a splashing sea, with just as much on his hands as he could manage to keep her gunwale from being stove in against a black rock; and with a heavy grey squall to windward. (This squall, by the by, was the very same which appeared in the picture of the Magra of 1847, and so were the snowy mountains above; only the squall at Amalfi entered on the left, and at the Magra on the right.) Now the scenery of Amalfi is impressive alike in storm or calm, and the writer has seen the Mediterranean as majestic and as southern-looking in its rage as in its rest. But it is treating both the green water and woods unfairly to destroy their peace without expressing their power; and withdraw from them their sadness and their sun, without the substitution of any effect more terrific than that of a squall at the Nore. The snow on the distant mountains chilled what it could not elevate, and was untrue to the scene besides; there is no snow on the Monte St. Angelo in summer except what is kept for the Neapolitan confectioners. The great merit of the picture was its rock-painting; too good to have required the aid of the exaggeration of forms which satiated the eye throughout the composition.

Mr. F. R. Pickersgill's "Contest of Beauty" (No. 515.), and Mr. Uwins's "Vineyard Scene in the South of France," were, after Mr. Mulready's works, among the most interesting pieces of color in the Exhibition. The former, very rich and sweet in its harmonies, and especially happy in its contrasts of light and dark armor; nor less in the fancy of the little Love who, losing his hold of the orange boughs, was falling ignominiously without having time to open his wings. The latter was a curious example of what I have described as abstraction of color. Strictly true or possible it was not; a vintage is usually a dusty and dim-looking procedure; but there were poetry and feeling in Mr. Uwins's idealization of the sombre black of the veritable grape into a luscious ultramarine purple, glowing among the green leaves like so much painted glass. The figures were bright and graceful in the extreme and most happily grouped. Little else that could be called color was to be seen upon the walls of the Exhibition, with the exception of the smaller works of Mr. Etty. Of these, the single head, "Morning Prayer," (No. 25.), and the "Still Life" (No. 73.), deserved, allowing for their peculiar aim, the highest praise. The larger subjects, more especially the St. John, were wanting in the merits peculiar to the painter; and in other respects it is alike painful and useless to allude to them. A very important and valuable work of Mr. Harding was placed, as usual, where its merits could be but ill seen, and where its chief fault, a feebleness of color in the principal light on the distant hills, was apparent. It was one of the very few views of the year which were transcripts, nearly without exaggeration, of the features of the localities.

Among the less conspicuous landscapes, Mr. W. E. Dighton's "Hay Meadow Corner" deserved especial notice; it was at once vigorous, fresh, faithful, and unpretending, the management of the distance most ingenious, and the painting of the foreground, with the single exception of Mr. Mulready's above noticed, unquestionably the best in the room. I have before had occasion to notice a picture by this artist, "A Hayfield in a Shower," exhibited in the British Institution in 1847, and this year (1848) in the Scottish Academy, whose sky, in qualities of rainy, shattered, transparent grey, I have seldom seen equalled; nor the mist of its distance, expressive alike of previous heat and present beat of rain. I look with much interest for other works by this painter.

A hurried visit to Scotland in the spring of this year, while it enables the writer to acknowledge the ardor and genius manifested in very many of the works exhibited in the Scottish Academy, cannot be considered as furnishing him with sufficient grounds for specific criticism. He cannot, however, err in testifying his concurrence in the opinion expressed to him by several of the most distinguished members of that Academy, respecting the singular merit of the works of Mr. H. Drummond. A cabinet picture of "Banditti on the Watch," appeared to him one of the most masterly, unaffected, and sterling pieces of quiet painting he has ever seen from the hand of a living artist; and the other works of Mr. Drummond were alike remarkable for their manly and earnest finish, and their sweetness of feeling.

ND
1135
R87
1873
v.1-2

Ruskin, John
Modern painters

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY